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COMMONWEA

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture April 2

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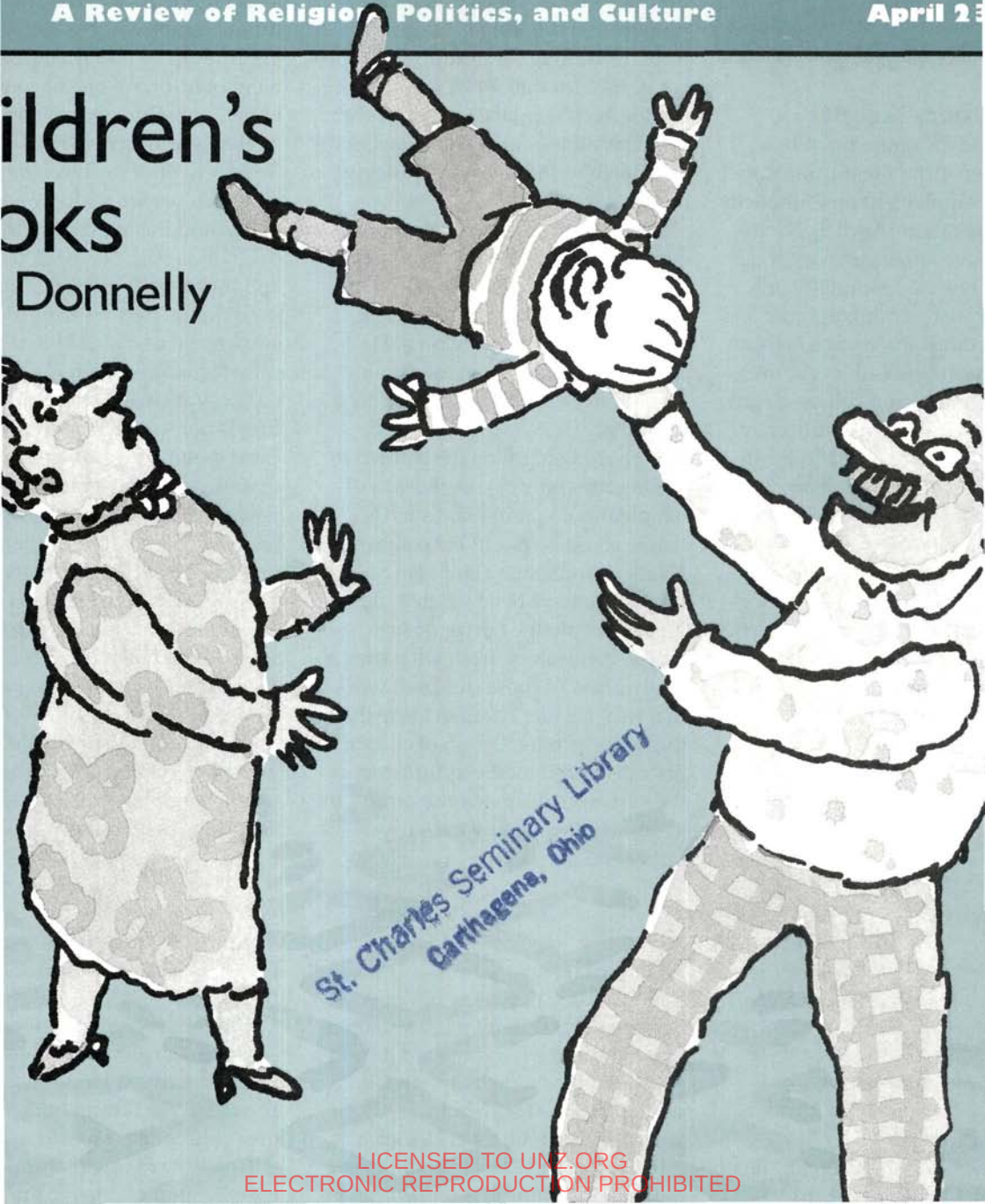

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To the Editors

Your brothers' keeper

I wish to note the omission of religious brothers from the introductory page to the supplement on Catholicity in higher education [April 9]. Such omissions have long been part of our lot, but this one was especially unpleasant because of our corporate and individual contributions to American Catholic education at all levels, including university and college-degree granting institutions. In addition to the seven which the Christian Brothers sponsor in the United States, various other orders of brothers have similar long histories.

Eleven members of my congregation, including our superior general—alone among the orders—participated in conversations in 1989 that were an important stage in the evolution of *Ex corde ecclesiae*; and many of us have followed up at diocesan and regional levels ever since. Even so, while we have grown inured to being ignored in certain circles, I devoutly hope *Commonweal* isn't one of them.

(BROTHER) PATRICK ELLIS, F.S.C.
Baltimore, Md.

The writer is past president of The Catholic University of America and of La Salle University.

From the editors: Our apologies.

Alleva's clarity

In his review of *Life Is Beautiful* [March 26], Richard Alleva wrote what I thought and expressed what I couldn't. Still, while not without its dichotomies and ambivalences of feeling and fact, *Life Is Beautiful* is an excellent film. I'm grateful not just for the review but also for the closure it brought to my mixed reactions.

(REV.) MICHAEL PERRY
Rockaway Point, N.Y.

Alleva II

I think Richard Alleva missed the point of *Life Is Beautiful*. He faults Roberto Benigni for muffling the horror of the Holocaust "for the sake of the viewer's mental comfort." Yet the movie itself tells us at the outset that it is "a fable" and it makes no attempt to be realistic.

Benigni was obviously not concerned with illustrating the horrors of the Holocaust (deportees stumbling half-dead out of boxcars, barracks with tiers of living skeletons). He wanted to make us feel the father's love for his son and the son's trust in his father.

Perhaps Benigni can be blamed for having the audacitiy, or the lack of imagination, to think that such a theme could be put in the context of a Nazi extermination camp, yet he might also have believed that viewers would supply the horror of such a situation themselves, from what they already knew of those camps. It worked that way for me. I did not leave the theater breathing "a sigh of comfort." I left disturbed by the inhumanity of the system that created the camps, but genuinely touched by the story of the father and the son.

JOHN MCCUDDEN
Evanston, Ill.

Alleva III

Richard Alleva's review of Roberto Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful* reads somewhat like a priest's wayward homily so fixed on the Crucifixion that it downplays the Resurrection. Alleva joins other prominent critics such as John Simon and David Denby in seeing Benigni's film as a denial of the Holocaust, and Benigni's character, Guido, as little more than a clown.

But Guido can also be seen as a Nazi-era catcher in the rye, assigning himself to protect childhood innocence from the horrors of reality, which happens to be the most natural of human inclinations in times of trouble and tragedy. It seems to me that the irrepressible Benigni, whose name suggests his personality, hints at quite different motives.

It should be said that, from the moment of birth, we are all condemned to die, even though the horrors of the twentieth century prompted Samuel Beckett to offer the bleak alternative view that we are really condemned to live. Amid the mystery of life and death, it is religion, art, philosphy, and humor that offer welcome solace. In so doing, they all require a willing suspension of disbelief that paradoxically facilitates belief.

The worldwide success of Benigni's film is not so much a form of Holocaust denial as an affirmation of life that can even most jubilantly be reflected in Benigni's prancing on the backs of chairs at the academy awards presentation. That affirmation also is incorporated in the Jewish expression: "*L'chayim*," that surely must have consoled many Holocaust victims.

For sure, *la vita* is often not very *bella*. And when it isn't, more than despair is needed to make life palatable. Thus, even clowns can be helpful when, laughing on the outside, they are crying despairingly on the inside.

CUTHBERT CARSON MANN
Glendora, Calif.

The author replies

For Mr. Mann: If no horror of Crucifixion, then no glory of Resurrection. The latter proceeds from the former. And this horror can be conveyed even with comedy, as Lina Wertmuller proved in the last half-hour of her great film, *Seven Beauties*.

Nowhere in my review do I ever accuse Benigni of *denying* the Holocaust. Of course he wouldn't deny it; his own father was in a concentration camp. I wrote, "The Holocaust should never be *comfortably conveyed*" (emphasis added).

For Mr. McCudden: Yes, *Life*'s narrator does tell us at the outset that we are about to see a "fable." But

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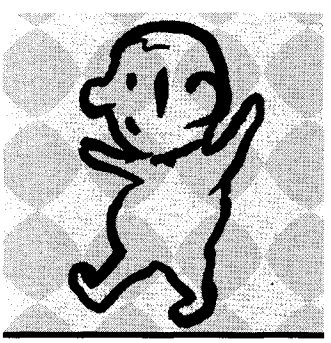

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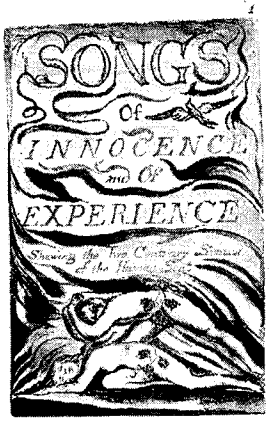

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why should we believe him? Question authority, even the authority of fictional narrators. The proof has to be in the film itself, not in its preface. What I saw in *Life*'s first half was whimsical realism leavened with mild slapstick, a blend familiar from hundreds of Italian comedies such as *Big Deal on Madonna Street*. The second half is tragicomedy laced with horror, a tricky combination which Benigni, in my opinion, is largely unable to bring off because he is unwilling to risk bruising the sensibilities of his audience.

But even if *Life* is a fable, so what? The genre itself doesn't excuse the artist from being responsible to his subject matter. And I didn't blame Benigni for having the audacity to set his tragicomedy in a concentration camp. My review complains of his *lack* of audacity in settling for pathos instead of power.

For Rev. Michael Perry: You understand very well the function of the critic. And I'm in *your* debt for indicating that function so economically in your letter.

RICHARD ALLEVA

Repent

When I first read the editorial note "Richard Neuhaus May Repent" [March 12], I thought of the old rule, so familiar to soldiers in an army, "Let no good deed go unpunished." Father Neuhaus has openly confessed that running a journal of opinion can itself be the near occasion of sin, the sin of crankiness; and that confession then provides the editors of *Commonweal* the opportunity for some rather captious free advice on how to avoid this sin.

"Gee—can I?"

But reading on in that same issue I found that John Garvey's column "Sneering at Religion" provided the best commentary on the editorial. There is a reason for the stress in Neuhaus's "The Public Square" on the sins of the cultural Left: the bias of the Left toward reporting its own flaws. For example, when Jerry Falwell averred that the anti-Christ is a Jewish male now roaming the world, the press made sure that Falwell's "exegesis" was trumpeted around the world, with an added fillip of jibes from late-night comedians ("Sounds like Sidney Blumenthal," Mark Phillips said tongue-in-cheek). In other words, the culture makes sure Falwell looks as silly as he often makes himself out to be.

But nonsense on the Left goes untreated, unreported, unexamined, except by, it seems, your own John Garvey and Richard John Neuhaus. Yes, dismay at leftish bias can seem like the censoriousness of the schoolmarm, if not handled correctly. But so, it seems, can mote-and-beam criticism of that dismay.

(REV.) EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
Denver, Colo.

Beyond philosophy

Please let me take gentle issue with the last paragraph of David Toolan's review of *Beyond Darkness* [January 29], Shirley Du Boulay's recent biography of Bede Griffiths, and especially with the sentences suggesting that Griffiths's understanding of pluralism "merely exchanges the imperialism of Western metaphysics for an imperialism of Eastern metaphysics." In actual fact, Griffiths tries to liberate the religious mind from subservience to any particular system of philosophy by showing, first of all, that the Christ event is one thing and the philosophical terms (conceptual structures) in which we interpret it are quite another. Semitic phenomenon, Greek hermeneutics: historically linked but essentially distinct and potentially separable.

The Greek connection may have been the best available arrangement for the cultures of the Mediterranean world in the early centuries of Christian history, and it turned out to be remarkably adaptable to the peoples of northern Europe and Asia. But clinging to it in our day seems to amount to declaring that Christianity renounces its proper ambition to become a truly universal religion. Not all cultures in today's world see reality in terms of Greek thought forms. Nor should they be required to if they are genuinely attracted to authentic (but not necessarily Greek) Christianity.

JOHN BLAKE MORE
Cancun, Mexico

The author replies:

I think I entirely agree with John Blake More that it is a grave error to think that the only proper framework for interpreting the gospel of Jesus Christ is classic Greek philosophy. That would be the "Western imperialism" I was talking about. And hence I can only praise Bede Griffiths's effort to interpret Christianity using the categories of Advaita Vedanta. My point, though, was that this effort was not entirely successful—because, in my judgment, it effaced some essential elements of the biblical tradition (for example, it's prophetic dimension).

DAVID TOOLAN

'Affaire Pinochet'

Thanks immensely for publishing Maryknoll Father Stephen De Mott's information on the Pinochet affair [March 26]. Be advised, however, that De Mott's article did not shore up my faith in the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church. *O tempora, O mores*!

(REV.) FROWIN BROWNFIELD
Springfield, Mo.

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The future?

Each Easter sees a predictable resurrection of serious interest in Christianity from the nation's usually skeptical or indifferent secular magazines and newspapers. This year was no exception. *Newsweek* featured a digitally enhanced portrait of Jesus on the cover and an assertive essay by Kenneth Woodward on "How Christianity Shaped the Modern World." With typical British drollery, the *Economist* ran an "obituary" to mark the anniversary of Jesus' death and the approaching third millennium of Christianity. Reviewing the historical Jesus debate, the obit writer laid out the contradictory aspects of Scripture, the historical triumphs, tragedies, and sins of the church, and the competing theological visions that now seek to clarify the meaning of Jesus. In the end, the obituarist somewhat limply concluded, "it would seem that Jesus, in his older years, has grown more tolerant."

Well, maybe. Not to be left out of this Easter parade, the *New York Times Magazine* devoted countless pages to an Easter Sunday story about Catholic seminarians ("Why a Priest," April 4, 1999). The magazine's cover featured three smiling, breviary-wielding seminarians, pointedly dressed in black and wearing Roman collars. Mischievously printed across the men's loins was the title, "The Last Counterculture." "No one lives at further remove from consumerist, sexualized, technocratic America than its Catholic priests," read the consumerist, sexualized, technocratic cover copy. "And nobody feels the disjunction more acutely than young seminarians."

What followed inside was yet another rehearsal of the demographic facts and ecclesiological conundrums surrounding the growing shortage of priests. In an essentially sympathetic portrait, the article focused on seminarians at Mount Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, the nation's second largest seminary and one of its most theologically conservative. Inevitably, questions about celibacy and sex took up a good deal of space. After all, the article repeatedly asked, what sort of a man would give up sex for a low-prestige job with pauper's wages like the Catholic priesthood?

What sort indeed? Although the seminarians described are in many respects quite appealing and their vocations seem genuine enough, it was hard not to feel despondent upon finishing the article. It is worrisome, for one thing, that the seminarians' opinions seem as uniform as their clothing. More worrisome still, is that what the seminarians confidently proclaim to be "the future" of the church looks and sounds a great deal like the past—the 1950s to be precise. Are Catholics in the pews ready for a return to sermons on the evils of contraception and masturbation? Evidently they better be. Will celibate seminarians who shield their eyes and ears from the sexual decadence of "Seinfeld" and the seductions of rock-and-roll be capable of hearing what their future parishioners say about life in a pluralistic, secular society, let alone about sex within marriage? Catholics should get ready to hear plenty about the redemptive meaning of suffering and Pope John Paul's highly mystical "theology of the body." Can seminarians who believe there is some "supernatural element" to priestly garb or who talk blithely about guardian angels and fawningly about the pope's every utterance, make themselves heard by an educated

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"If I'm a thinking animal, you, I suppose are a thinking man?"

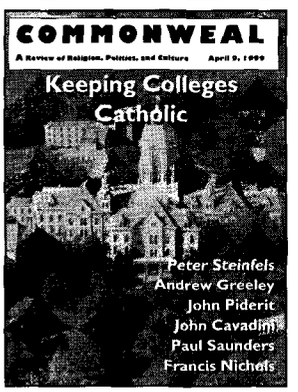
and questioning laity? They're going to give it the old seminary try!

In short, if the *Times* article is accurate, seminaries like Mount Saint Mary's are preparing priests to serve a church in full retreat from the modern world. "Countercultural" is a notoriously promiscuous term, used by those at every point along the ideological spectrum, from advocates of free love to champions of unfettered capitalism. What is striking about the countercultural stance of Saint Mary's seminarians is how much it lacks self-reflection. Each man had a conversion story to tell, usually tracing a trajectory from a life of ordinary secular ambition and materialistic desires to one stressing self-denial and religious obedience to the hierarchy. Yet the distance traveled from obedient, rule-following careerist to obedient, rule-following seminarian is perhaps not as great as it at first appears, just as abandoning the mysticism of rock-and-roll for the often questionable mysticism of Mariology may represent a spiritual transformation that is more apparent than real. In short, these future priests seem to be in dire need of a crash course in the fiction of J.F. Powers.

It is instructive to place the *Times Magazine* and *Newsweek* stories side by side. In *Newsweek*, Christianity, though flawed, is seen transforming Western civilization's understandings of God, of death's finality and the afterlife, of ethics and the meaning of suffering. Christianity is largely responsible for our ideas about the very nature of individuality and individual conscience, for elevating the status of women and children, moderating the violence of war, creating universities, bringing rationality to bear on the legal system, and upon occasion, providing a basis for unity among diverse peoples. That agenda isn't countercultural, but *cultural*, in the best sense of the word. It speaks of a world intellectually engaged and transformed, not piously scolded and dismissed.

In throwing open the windows of the church to the modern world, Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council confidently asserted that the church had much to learn from secular institutions, especially from democracy's emphasis on tolerance and pluralism. Error, the church belatedly admitted, does have rights. Yet the *Times Magazine* tells us that the "crux" of the seminarians' countercultural convictions rests on a belief that "the so-called freedoms of our secular and relativistic culture have not paid off...on the contrary, they have created a dangerous and uninhibited world where families are ravaged by divorce, abortion, addiction, and violence." Echoing the pope, one seminarian offered the following alternative view of freedom as a possible solution to these problems: "Freedom is knowing your choices and then choosing the truth."

No reasonable person can deny that the cost of modern freedom and toleration can be high. Nor can we be complacent in the face of moral failure. But freedom entails spiritual risk, not religious certainty. The "truth" these seminarians want "to propose, not impose," remains an unvarying and ahistorical truth, one that is naively thought immune to change or error. What is woefully missing in the seminarians' perspective is some sense of the moral damage caused by the church's long refusal to acknowledge freedom of conscience as a fundamental Christian value—and a fundamental form of Christian loyalty. This is a lesson, it appears, that Catholics—or at least some Catholics—may have to learn all over again.



The special supplement of *Commonweal* (April 9) on the Catholic character and identity of Catholic colleges and universities defines the state of the issue—at least for the moment.

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From the archives

Throughout 1999, Commonweal *will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. Here from the March 10, 1950 issue is an editorial, titled "Go Climb a More Meaningful Tree," taking issue with* New Yorker *writer E.B. White's lack of metaphysical reach.*

It is ungracious to be critical on birthdays, but the *New Yorker*'s position as champion of individual dignity makes us rather uncomfortable. The work of E.B. White dominates the comment made in "The Talk of the Town." His short story in the [twenty-fifth] anniversary issue is characteristic, and for that, revealing. It is a fantasy-satire on the destruction of the world. There are many things Mr. White includes in his rather sweeping satire of our society, things which can be facilely satirized: Pearl Harbor investigations, radio commercials, military men, spy hunts, *New York Times* editorials, *Life*'s concern with sex and religion, best sellers, etc.; but the essential attack is against cheapening human life and human relationships in an artificial, regimented, and commercialized environment; against "further debasement of taste and intellectual life in general." This is a pretty strong position.

The positive thought whence these opinions spring is not so firm. The magazine's belief in "the American concept of individual dignity" often expresses itself in Mr. White's sermons from stones: perceptive and restrained remarks on nature and man (in the anniversary issue, rain and a tugboat captain). These essays are wonderfully written, right and truthful in what they say, but they say little. They are content with sentiment, and in this atomic age which so disturbs Mr. White, sentiment is ineffectual. One can lament the fact that there is no world government to prevent war, but it is stupid to act as though it were only perversity on the part of the rest of us that blocks it. The *New Yorker* says that man can never be wholly mechanized, human spirit will survive. But man can destroy his values and his own sanity; that is what Mr. White fears and decries. "*Will the words never quit going round and round? Is there no end to this noisy carrousel of indigestible ideas? Will no one ever catch the brass ring?*" This is a terrible cry. Where is the brass ring? There is none, if life is no more than tenderness and belief in the goodness of the cool rain. The good life as it is seen on West 43rd Street is, sadly, impotent against barbarism. The dignity of the person requires that we commit ourselves to more than quiet in terminals and the shattering beauty of the cold morning.

THE EDITORS

Continuing the Conversation

Catholic identity The most recent discussions about *Ex corde ecclesiae* and its implementing norms have largely been about what kind of juridical control will be acceptable to the American Catholic colleges and universities. The discussions did not start that way, as Peter Steinfels notes in his article (*see*, "Does Rome Have the Best Answer?" special supplement, "Keeping Colleges Catholic," *Commonweal*, April 9). Earlier issues of curriculum, liturgy, and service have been supplemented by mandates, definitions of fidelity, and quota counts of who among us is Catholic. As the discussion has moved toward more legal issues, early good feelings have turned to frustration. Many academic leaders have made the effort to get Rome and the bishops to understand why what has been proposed about legal norms would compromise the colleges in ways that would significantly impair their ability to function as authentic institutions of higher education. They have not been heard. What has now become painful for many in this dialogue is that the emphasis on clarifying Catholic identity has been overshadowed by the determination to have legal rules defining what it means to be a Catholic college.

Although hope remains that an accommodation can be reached, and that a set of acceptable juridical norms can be developed, the discussion to date has led me to believe that there will be norms enacted that a significant number of Catholic colleges will be unable to accept. Legal expert Paul Saunders, in his article ("Look Before You Leap") in the same issue, gives ample reason to convince trustees of the peril that exists in signing on to the latest norms based on *Ex corde ecclesiae*, at least in anything resembling their current form. And so, while there is a sincere interest by many administrators, faculty, and trustees in strengthening Catholic identity on their campuses, many institutions will refuse to amend their bylaws. They see that the legal issues go well beyond canon-law matters, affecting civil law. They will not surrender their autonomy and responsibility in the governance of their own institutions. At the same time, the fact that there will be some juridical norms seems to be a certainty. Rome has required the bishops to act quickly and they speak as if they are compelled to do so at their meeting in November. What will happen after that?

It is my hope that, after the implementation document defines which institutions are Catholic, there will be room for

The September 26, 1997 issue of Commonweal *featured an interview with Frank Macchiarola. To reread the interview online please visit the Editor's Choice section of our website by clicking on the Inside Commonweal button on the home page at:*

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an accommodation between the local bishops and the colleges that cannot adhere to the norms completely. While Catholic college administrators see the closeness of their work with local dioceses, they often do not recognize the effective work done in campus ministry at public and secular colleges. I would hope that the same type of understanding and support will be extended to those institutions unable to accept the norms of *Ex corde ecclesiae*.

When I was first made aware of the fact that the norms being considered by the bishops would take on a legal focus, my training as a lawyer and law professor warned me that nothing good could come of this. At many times throughout the discussions, I began to feel that I was completely right. As time went by, however, I have begun to think that the imposition of these norms might have a positive dimension. Some colleges will choose to view their Catholic identity as tied to a legal relationship. They will "sign on" and in some respects the work of self-definition and renewal will have been done in the process. Formal connections will support the effort to achieve self-identity. Other colleges will choose to continue to see the affirmation of their Catholic identity as a responsibility for the community itself. They will measure their success not in terms of legal compliance, but in the way they follow the imperatives of their faith and in the way they evangelize in the communities they serve. The lack of official approbation will require self-definition and renewal on an on-going basis. The situation will challenge bishops to be close to those colleges and help develop the ideas embodied in *Ex corde ecclesiae*. It will be an interesting adventure for many of us. It can only be hoped that we will respect one another and follow the admonition "do no harm" in the common effort to enliven the dialogue between the gospel and the culture. □

Frank J. Macchiarola *is president of Saint Francis College in Brooklyn, New York.*

OF SEVERAL MINDS

WILLIAM PFAFF

SEND IN THE TROOPS

The only answer in Kosovo

Evacuation to Guam, Germany, or Turkey provides no solution to the Kosovo refugee problem. It represents denial of the fundamental problem, which is the war—which is being lost. Resettlement abroad means collaboration in Slobodan Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. His *fait accompli* is ratified. The only acceptable resolution for the refugees is to be escorted back to their homes (those homes that survive) and provided with the security in which they can rebuild their lives.

The only solution, then, is a NATO military victory. If there is no NATO victory over Serbia, there will no longer be a NATO. And now, no victory is imaginable without a land campaign. The debate over intervention is no longer a dispute over the means to an end. It is a debate over abandoning NATO and the American claim to international leadership. If the United States vetoes a land intervention—which is supported by majority French and British opinion—the United States can forget about NATO. Events since NATO air strikes began on March 24 have already weakened confidence in American-assured collective security in Europe, or anywhere else.

Polls conducted April 1-2 in Britain found that 66 percent of those surveyed expressed support for British participation in a NATO ground attack on Serbian forces—up 19 percent in a single week. Only 27 percent were opposed (with 7 percent undecided). A poll taken April 3 in France found 58 percent support ground intervention. In a separate French poll, 55 percent of the respondents favored French ground intervention, even without NATO.

The pressure against ground intervention comes primarily from Washington. Congressional opposition is very strong, although *Newsweek* says 54 percent of the U.S. public would send troops "to help bring peace." Washington policy makers still see Kosovo through the distorting glass of the presidential campaign. Every act is weighed for its putative effect on the American electorate. What defeat would do to American opinion worldwide is ignored.

This moral isolation is by now characteristic of Washington, and is potentially lethal for U.S. national interests. One might argue, and I have, that Western Europe's politically morbid dependence upon Washington needs to be broken for the good of both sides—but surely not by defeat at the hands of Slobodan Milosevic.

NATO planners cannot have neglected the intervention contingency. The forces exist. Air-mobile forces are available from the United States, as are British and French airborne regiments, rapid-reaction formations, and special forces.

Retired General William Odem, now of the Hudson Institute, has proposed an armored thrust from Hungary—a new NATO member—toward Belgrade, to dislodge Milosevic's government. This is politically tricky, as it could compromise the Hungarian minority in Serbia. However, the size of Serbia and Kosovo together is less than that of Kentucky (some 39,700 square miles). Kosovo is the size of greater Los Angeles. A tank column can cross it in an hour.

NATO could certainly confront Serbian police and troops, not only with an armored invasion from the north and breakout by the NATO troops now in Macedonia, but also with an airborne landing, sustained from Albania (less

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than 90 miles from central Kosovo) to launch operations in the center of the country, severing Serbian lines of communication. It is time for speed and improvisation.

The NATO military task is to drive organized Serbian forces out of Kosovo, destroy them and the present Serbian government, and restore order and authority in Kosovo. Much is said about the Serbian guerrilla potential, which is real. There is, however, no apparent reason why rearmed and retrained forces of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) could not clear surviving Serb irregulars from the Kosovo mountains. NATO should not attempt to occupy Serbia, once its army is destroyed.

Catastrophic scenarios, citing the example of Vietnam, consistently neglect the fact that NATO forces would operate in Kosovo against a hated Serb invader, with support from the population and the KLA. In Vietnam, the United States supported a government actively or passively opposed by a popular majority, against the armed opposition of the most dynamic politico-military force in the country. There is a difference.

The Kosovars wanted freedom, and the tactics of their KLA precipitated this crisis. Until now the Western governments have wanted Kosovo to remain part of Serbia. That no longer is possible. The Balkans are already profoundly destabilized. NATO should support Kosovo's independence in the hope that it might eventually be ratified as part of a larger Balkan settlement, negotiated with Kosovo's neighbors and a successor government to the present one in Belgrade, with Russian participation.

NATO and the United States, at this writing, continue to substitute palliative but morally hypocritical gestures—refugee airlifts and "temporary" resettlements—for military choices that would cost NATO lives. Death, however, is part of the military contract. France's former commander in Bosnia, Philippe Morillon, has said of America's illusions on this subject: "Who are these soldiers who are ready to kill and not ready to die?" □

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OF SEVERAL MINDS

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

THE EUCHARIST

What does it do?

Coming home from Mass today I realize that the more I go, the more I want to go, but the less I fully understand what I'm doing. Or rather what *we* the church are doing. Celebrating the eucharistic liturgy seems essential to the Christian life while remaining in part a mystery.

Mystery can be defined most aptly as "infinite intelligibility"; thus those who worship God as Truth do well to push further and further down the path of knowledge. As I have been discovering, there is a huge body of liturgical theology devoted to the Paschal mystery to be perused when faith seeks understanding.

Some contemporary questions in church practice add energy to the quest. Why do so many Catholics, especially young Catholics, not attend Mass regularly? Gallup polls find that 70 percent of the Catholics surveyed think "being a good Catholic is not dependent on going to Mass every Sunday." Focus groups report that many Catholics say that at Mass "no power/spirituality/awe is evident." After all, goes one refrain, "I meet God elsewhere, too."

Well, of course, most assuredly. God is always about in the quotidian. Catholics who say "I have learned more about the love of God through twelve-step programs than I have ever found in the church," demonstrate that they have assimilated much of the gospel they heard proclaimed at church. They recognize the good news that God is Love and enables conversion, forgiveness, liberation, and a transformation of life—one day at a time. That "Higher Power" relied upon in the first step of Alcoholics Anonymous is also known as the Holy Spirit.

But the church seems to have failed to convey to many of its members the real presence of Christ and the Spirit in the

"It's been a very meaningful experience, Reverend. We must repeat it sometime."

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Sunday eucharistic celebration. The manifold ways that Christ is present at Mass must be made clear to tomorrow's Catholics or the church won't survive. Since Christ promises that he will be present when two or more are gathered together in his name, we can encounter Christ in the gathered assembly, as well as within each worshiper.

Christ who is the Word of God also meets us in the Scriptures and in their exposition. (No matter how bad the homilist is, he can't ruin the readings.) The person of the priest or presider also manifests the presence of Christ. Then we come into the presence of Christ in the eucharistic rite, drinking the saving cup and eating the life-giving bread, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Faced with this most intimate act of union, this dimension of the mystery that is "real *par excellence*," I find that my powers of comprehension falter. "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," cries the father of the epilectic boy begging Jesus to cure his son. I need help in understanding how the historical body of Jesus relates to his resurrected body, to the sacramental body, and to the ecclesial body of the church.

Of course, I readily admit that as a citizen of the secular scientific world, I also don't really know what "matter" is, or for that matter, how one unique human "body" develops and progresses through space/time. The uncertainties of our scientific, philosophical, and metaphysical world views contribute to our theological questioning.

In the humanities, moreover, scholars advocate complex new theories of signs and symbols, and expound on the uses of language; these ideas also have bearing on our understandings of sacramental and symbolic reality. A symbol supposedly embodies both presence and absence, and I need help understanding how this applies to the sacraments. Will I live long enough to see how the next millennium's eucharistic theologians work out new syntheses of knowledge? Much more immediately, I hope I see a beginning on the monumental task of adult catechetical instruction.

Meanwhile, back in the parish, I continue to be drawn into the power of the eucharistic mystery to effect transformations. This rich ritual of simultaneously giving and receiving works to propel me, to impel me to change my life. Ritual, or "the choreography of the soul," makes its demand while giving comfort and joy. Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, we enter into a new dimension of reality and confirm its meaning for one another.

What we imagine, attend to, and imitate we become. In the eucharistic celebration, Christians engage in a high form of play that incorporates us into the divine life. We join together with the angels and the saints in offering thanks and praise to God. We sing God's words in the psalms and responses. At the ritual meal we take the part of Christ's disciples. Then we imitate Christ himself in offering each other peace, and praying the Lord's Prayer.

A thought. Priests and the servers wear vestments as signs of their roles in the drama. Maybe the rest of us in the assembly would do well to don vestments too, our thanks and praise garments—much like the gowns worn by Oxford scholars to signal their role as seekers after wisdom.

Fundamentally, I find that the liturgy engenders and inspires the desire to love God and neighbor. The assurance of Christ's love casts out fear and moves the heart. Here's where visual beauty, music, gesture, metaphor, silence, symbols, and the experience of joy become all-important. Joy energizes, heals, and comforts. Joyful hope and desire govern attention. When our hearts burn within us we believe in heaven. After "peak experiences" of transfiguration we can trudge back down the mountain and persevere in God's work. As Augustine writes of the great Sacrament, Christ calls out to us: "Grow and you shall feed on me. But you shall not change me into your own substance, as you do with the food of your body. Instead, you shall be changed into me." □

John B. Breslin

ANDRE DUBUS, R.I.P.

A writer's writer

In a review of Andre Dubus's *Selected Stories*, fellow novelist Anne Tyler commented about the risky ending of perhaps Dubus's best short work, "A Father's Story": "He has a way of stepping forth, however thin the ice." A risky image itself since three years before the book appeared, Dubus had been struck down in a late-night hit-and-run accident on a lonely stretch of I-93 north of Boston. Dubus had stopped to aid two motorists in distress and suffered the loss of one leg and the use of the other.

But the ironies go deeper. The plot of "A Father's Story" turns on a similar accident and the father's cover-up to shield his only daughter from criminal charges. Like several other Dubus protagonists—and indeed like Dubus himself—Luke Ripley nurtures a richly idiosyncratic spiritual life. Every morning he spends a meditative hour before riding off to a 6:30 A.M. Mass celebrated by Father Paul, whom he calls "my best, in truth my only, friend." And so Luke must confront his multiple guilt about the accident: failing to call for emergency medical help, denying the victim's family a slayer's name and face, once concealing his sin from Father Paul.

Dubus's risky ending, his treading on thin ice, comes in a concluding dramatized dialogue between Luke and God in which Luke defends his action as that of "the father of a girl," a role God denied himself in sending his Son to suffer for our sins:

> I could bear the pain of watching and knowing my sons' pain, could bear it with pride as they took the

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whip and nails. But You never had a daughter and, if You had, You could not have borne her Passion.

So, He says, you love her more than you love Me.

I love her more than I love truth.

Then you love in weakness, He says.

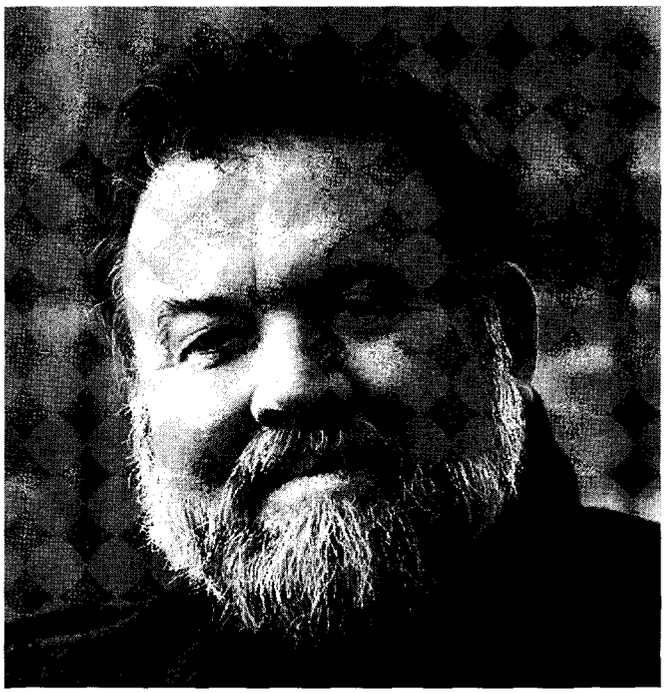
As You love me, I say....

Risks were part of Andre Dubus's life, from his youthful years in the Marine Corps (another rich source of story material) to that brave moment on the highway when he likely saved the life of a woman by pushing her out of the swerving car's path, further endangering himself. Dubus found his recuperation almost intolerably painful and frustrating, and wrote no fiction for several years. Instead, he published a collection of personal essays, *Broken Vessels*. Tobias Wolff has written of it, and his comment applies to all of Dubus's writing: "His is an unapologetically sacramental vision of life in which ordinary things participate in the miraculous, the miraculous in ordinary things. He believes in God, and talks to him, and doesn't mince words.... He is open to mystery, and of all mysteries the one that interests him most is the human potential for self-transcendence."

Dubus found this self-transcendence in carefully chosen venues that reflect his own life experience: Catholic schools in Louisiana; the male-dominated military; and in his later work, the Merrimack River Valley, northwest of Boston, an uneasy meeting point of town and gown amid the rubble of obsolete mills and factories. What his stories have in common is an assurance of authenticity, not just for the places, with their bayous or ward rooms or desolate winter roads, but more importantly for the troubled human beings—Dubus's stock in trade—who with their distinctive accents, prejudices, and graces, attempt to puzzle out the meanings of the lives they've been dealt and have frequently messed up.

A consciousness of sin permeates Dubus's stories, which is not surprising in a writer who, when asked for a proper adjective to describe his work, answered "Catholic." Dubus accepts our flawed condition as a given, but he manages to present his characters' failings with an equal conviction that grace is powerfully at work in the world. In a number of his stories, this pattern of sin and grace is played out within a specifically Catholic setting (as with Luke Ripley); but just as often, the characters have no religious convictions or, at most, exhibit a vestigial sensibility of the divine in lives otherwise determined by an overtly secular culture. Moral questions remain, nonetheless, questions shaped and colored by family values, ethnic heritage, military ethos, intellectual training. It is to these moral issues that Dubus relentlessly returns, exploring their demands and paradoxes in the lives of middle-class Americans of the mid-twentieth century.

Dubus's characters are apt to take the law into their own hands to avenge or protect family or friend. He makes no abstract moral judgment on these visceral tribal loyalties, but it is clear that the psychic price of such action comes high. As the man who has just murdered his son's murderer in



"Killings" tells the story to his wife, "the words had no images for him, he did not see himself doing what the words said he had done; he only saw himself on the road." And later, as his wife sleeps beside him, "he shuddered with a sob that he kept silent in his heart." Whether or not the murder is ever discovered, Matt has been marked, like Cain.

In his three decades as a published writer, Andre Dubus produced a baker's dozen of books, mainly collections of short stories. While many of his contemporaries were experimenting with minimalism or pursuing an academic aloofness, he stuck to a realism that goes back to Chekov, his great hero. Flannery O'Connor, he admitted, frightened him; but from another Southerner, William Faulkner, he took the rhythms of his long sentences and his focus on details. For the rest he trusted his instincts and the authenticity of the lives he observed.

Perhaps Dubus's greatest contribution to contemporary writing was his enormous compassion. You cannot read his stories without feeling his commitment to his characters, even the thieves and the rapists. Dubus took the Jesus of the parables at face value, and nowhere more so than in his refusal to play judge. With the biblical Jeremiah, he affirmed the tortuousness of the human heart, its endless complexity and complicity. But the ultimate source of Dubus's compassion was his faith in a God as close as the next moment of silence or the bread and wine on the altar. When Luke Ripley rejoices that after forty-eight years he still feels excitement on receiving the host at Mass, we do no violence to the story to hear the authentic tones of Dubus's own voice. We shall miss it. □

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Skip Barry

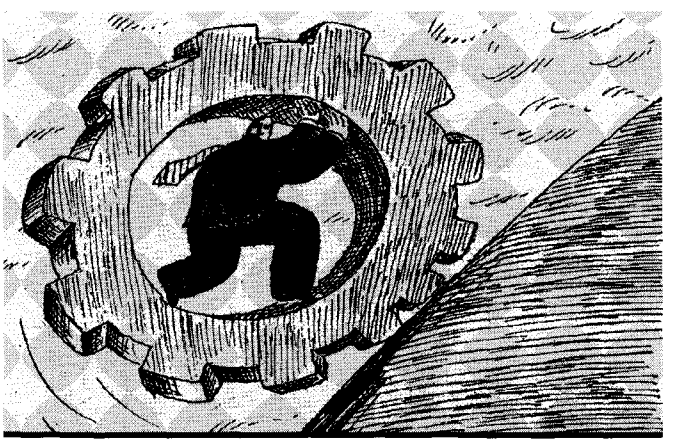
HOMELESS AT FIFTY-FIVE

Everything fell apart

"I never thought it could happen to me," says Jim, a fifty-five-year-old painter by trade, of being homeless. "For sixteen years my wife and I were happily married and we never had problems paying the bills. Then she passed away in 1984 and everything fell apart."

Always neatly dressed, usually in a workman's attire of blue jeans, denim shirt, and work boots, and without any substance-abuse problems or mental illness, Jim contradicts the familiar stereotypes of someone who is homeless. But like many of the homeless, a traumatic experience forced Jim toward the slippery slope of homelessness. Despite a resilient work ethic that keeps him busy working, even if it means taking jobs considered too menial or low-paying for an experienced blue-collar worker, he spends his nights in Boston's homeless shelters. Jim has joined the increasing numbers of workers, and in many instances, their children, who have become members of America's expanding homeless population.

Fortunately, President Bill Clinton and Congress have taken some notice. They added $150 million, a 20 percent increase, to this year's HUD budget to help the homeless, pushing funding for programs related to homeless-assistance to more than $1 billion. This means more money for shelters, drug and alcohol treatment, and mental health and employment counseling. Politicians in Washington also want to close a loophole that will free up 40,000 housing subsidies for low-income households and provide another 50,000 for qualified working welfare recipients. At a time when funding social programs has become politically unpopular, the financial boost has been a welcome surprise. But Jim feels the solution for many like himself lies elsewhere. "Giving more money to these programs may help some of us, but there are many of us who just need a job that can pay for sky-rocketing rents," he observes. Too many of the jobs available today, he says, "pay only the minimum wage or a bit higher, and they cannot cover the rent and other bills."



Though the 1997 minimum-wage increase helped the country's approximately 10 million minimum-wage workers, it was not enough to pay the rent for a typical one-bedroom apartment in a metro area, and it would have to be doubled in most areas to be able to afford a typical two-bedroom unit.

Jim's experience of homelessness mirrors that of many living in today's homeless shelters. In what feels to him like a "countless" number of times over the past fourteen years, Jim would get a job and an apartment. With little money left after paying the rent, he would manage to stay afloat through frugal spending habits and by taking advantage of local soup kitchens and food pantries. But then an unexpected occurrence, such as a job lay-off, a temporary illness, or helping out a sibling in financial need, would invariably force him back onto the streets.

It has not always been so precarious for those in Jim's shoes. In 1970 there was a nationwide surplus of affordable housing. But converging twenty-five-year trends in the labor and housing markets, as well as declining government low-income assistance programs, have combined to erode the supply of affordable housing. On one hand, the loss of manufacturing jobs since 1970, coupled with the rise of lower-paying service jobs, declining union membership, and the diminishing value of the minimum wage, have all increased the number of low-income renters like Jim.

On the other hand, as a result of urban gentrification, condominium conversions, rising operating costs, and the abandonment and demolition of deteriorating units, many big cities have lost more than half of their supply of affordable housing. With affordable housing on the private market shrinking, the federal government added fuel to the fire by cutting back on housing assistance. In 1997, the number of new low-income housing subsidies was only one-seventh the number provided in 1977. With a record-high shortage of more than 4 million units, the proposed 90,000 new HUD housing subsidies will not be enough to compensate for the effects of twenty years of spending cuts.

As big-city mayors complain of overcrowded shelters, added money for shelters will keep some of the homeless off the streets. But with nearly 30 percent of the workforce now earning poverty-level wages, Washington and state governments need to step up efforts to insure that the rewards of a growing economy are more equitably distributed. To help those like Jim, government needs to increase low-income housing assistance, further boost the minimum wage, and strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit. "More shelters are not a happy solution to homelessness," says Jim. "I would much rather get a steady job, find an apartment, and settle down." □

Skip Barry *works at the Bristol Lodge Homeless Shelter in Waltham, Massachusetts.*

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TWO PILGRIMS

Faith in a warm climate

Heather King

It's the first day of our Oaxacan vacation. While my husband Tim, a Zen Buddhist, prepares for his morning meditation, I check my map one last time and head off for Mass at the Basílica de la Soledad. A recent convert, I've been looking forward to this for months. The story is that, back in the 1500s, a man was traveling from the countryside when he noticed an extra burro in his herd, one he hadn't started out with. The burro died just outside the gates of Oaxaca and, inside its saddle bags, the man found a beautiful statue of the Virgin of Solitude—*soledad* in Spanish—who became Oaxaca's patron saint and in whose honor the basilica, over the course of fifty years, was built.

As I set out, the light is the color of lemons, violet jacaranda blooms litter the sidewalk, and bells toll from every direction. The church is on the edge of a huge plaza off the Avenida Independencia, five blocks from our hotel. The stones of the plaza are set in square, repeating flower patterns, and the church and steps are also made of stone.

Inside, every square inch of wall and ceiling is covered with gilt scrollwork and paintings and scalloped alcoves with saints standing in them. From a glass case in back of the altar looms a huge statue of the Virgin. A black habit falls in a wide triangle, hiding her feet, and her tiny face peers out from a white wimple. Penitents shuffle toward her on their knees, leaving little trails in the dusty tile floor, like the wavering, silvery marks left by garden snails.

When Mass begins, I follow along as best I can from my missalette, catching isolated words—*"la tierra," "el cielo," "la paz."* During the Eucharist, a group of Indian women, *rebozos* draped over their heads like cowls, stand and sing the rosary in a kind of collective guttural croak so gripping that the hairs at the back of my neck stand on end. As we stand in line to receive the wafer, the angels hold their chandeliers, the saints gaze down from their alcoves, the acolyte holds a crescent-shaped salver beneath each mouth, and the priest whispers the holiest of holy words—*Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi*....I take the host on my tongue and, back at my pew, kneel on the dusty plank to give thanks.

Was it Einstein who said either nothing is a miracle or everything is? After Mass, I walk slowly back to the hotel, savoring the words of the liturgy, the thought of Christ's body being absorbed into mine. Magenta bougainvillea spills over tiled roofs and stucco walls painted deep gold, rose, faded green. An old man sweeps hibiscus petals from the sidewalk with a twig broom. Even the air, smelling of dust and diesel fumes, seems transfigured.

There is only the one small stain on my happiness: a pang that Tim isn't with me. I yearn to share my inchoate beliefs with him, yearn for us to grow in faith together. But he yearns just as much for me to go to his temple, and having learned the hard way that neither of us is about to change anytime soon, we now nurse our respective desires in silence.

"How was it?" he asks when I return to the hotel.

"Fine," I reply blandly. "Ready for breakfast?"

Every morning I go to Mass, Tim meditates and, afterwards, we go exploring. We walk down the hot, hard, fume-smelling sidewalks to the *mercado* down by the railroad tracks where women sit on the ground hawking wooden combs, heaps of headbands woven in vivid reds and greens, plastic bags of pineapple cut with a machete and sprinkled with chile and lime. We climb Oaxaca's highest hill to watch the sunset, marvel over the pre-Columbian figures in the Rudolfo Tamayo collection, take second-class buses to neighboring craft towns: Teotitlán, with its expert rug weavers, Coyotepec, home of the famous black pottery, the pre-Columban ruins of Monte Albán and Mitla.

Everywhere we go, we visit churches: the Templo de Santo Domingo with its vaulted dome and magnificent gold altar; the Church of San Felipe Neri, which features a plaster baby dressed in a white lace gown and lying in a tiny glass casket, its hands folded upright in prayer; the village churches of Tule and Tlacolula and Ocotlán, whose cool, hushed interiors provide a respite from the fiercely beating sun. Everywhere we see soaring arches, ornamental reliefs, angels and martyred saints, fake flowers, dead flowers, vases of roses and gladioli and calla lilies and, in pools of melted wax, oily *Lux Perpetua* candles burning in the dim, silvery light.

I find all this deeply meaningful, but it is a little tricky to navigate with Tim, whose Zen take on the topic of, say, life after death is likely to be a murmured, "But are we even alive to begin with?" He admires the churches' architecture and craftsmanship, but sees the rest as amusing, over-the-top kitsch, evidence of Catholicism's shaky underpinnings. As a rule, we eagerly search out common ground, are ultracareful not to tread on each other's beliefs, but finally he is

Heather King *writes from Los Angeles.*

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pushed over the edge. He stops before the figure of some long-forgotten saint with a staff and tunic, a walker of rock-strewn paths whose knees have big chunks of flesh torn away from them. "I'm sorry," he says, shaking his head. "I just don't get it."

Part of me—the part that longs to be seen as confident, rational, and sane—wants to jump in and explain it to him, but the truth is I don't quite "get it" either. The other part cannot find the words to say how I ache to touch Christ's wounded head, the mutilated hands and feet. The other part cannot explain my conviction that his Passion is a paradigm for the same agonizing fear—that if I die to myself there will be nothing left—that grips my soul every waking and sleeping hour. The other part is embarrassed to say how often my life feels as if I am crawling blindly forward, dragging my lacerated hands and knees toward a light that may or may not exist.

On our last afternoon, we visit the small museum that adjoins the Basílica de la Soledad. The front room is filled with an odd jumble of objects: a stuffed crocodile, a bottle of scorpions in formaldehyde, arrangements of *milagros*—tiny silver hands and feet and legs—arranged on red velvet to form the image of Christ, his arms spread wide in blessing. Farther back is a room lined with *retablos*—folk paintings on small rectangles of metal—testifying to the miracles wrought by the Virgin: the river receding, in the nick of time, from the head of the floundering swimmer: *Gracias a Dios*, 1938; the would-be murderer casting aside his machete in a flash of repentance: *Gracias a Dios*, 1902; the sick child in a tiny white out-of-proportion bed, the father, sombrero in hand, kneeling in prayer, the Virgin tilting in on her pedestal from a cloud in the corner: *Gracias a Dios*, 1918.

I study the *retablos* carefully, imagining a young girl licking the end of a brush, a child wiping smudges from a halo, a farmer, after a day of tending avocado fields, putting the finishing touches on a line of curlicue script.

I expect to find Tim rolling his eyes in a corner, but even he finds them absorbing. "Check this one out," he says, leading me to a picture of a man in a red shirt leaping to safety—with a helping hand from the Virgin, of course—just as his hapless burro pitches over a cliff.

Afterward, we emerge into the heat of mid-afternoon, walk to the *zócalo*, and settle in on a park bench to discuss the best way to get to the airport in the morning.

"Good af-ter-noon," a voice from somewhere says, but we aren't paying much attention. "Good af-ter-noon," we hear again, followed by a chorus of giddy laughter. We turn around to see a dozen or so teen-agers, in black-and-white Catholic school uniforms, staring at us with the kind of naked curiosity with which children might examine two bugs they have just trapped in a jar.

"*Buenas tardes*," Tim addresses the boy in front, whose goofy smile and rubbery limbs brand him immediately as the class clown. "What's your name?"

"My name ees Marcos," he says. "What ees your name?"

"*Me llamo Timoteo*," Tim says.

"Where do you leeve?" someone yells from the back.

"L.A.," Tim answers.

"Rrraiders!" "Diss-ney!" "Hully-wood!" the cries go up and, next thing we know, they are swarming around us, shouting questions, elbowing each other in the ribs, cracking-up, laughing.

Tim does most of the talking but, between my own semester of high-school Spanish and his translating, I am able to catch most of the conversation. Jorge, with his mournful eyes, is studying business; Rosa, in her knockoff Doc Martens, wants to be a lawyer; and Luis, with a black fringe of pompoms pinned to his sleeve, plays cornet in the school band. The media portray all teen-agers traveling in groups as crazed, bloodthirsty gang members but, encircled by these gracious Mexican youths, I feel more relaxed than I have the whole trip. All this vibrant flesh, these flashing smiles, are melting a hard little ball of resistance and fear I hardly knew I'd been carrying.

"Why are you here?" someone yells.

"Do you like our country?"

"What will be your memories of Oaxaca?" Marcos asks in Spanish.

"What did he say?" I ask, tugging at Tim's sleeve.

"He asked what your memories will be," Tim says.

"*Aquí, ahora*. Here, now: This will be my memory," I tell him and, behind my Ray-Bans, my eyes sting foolishly with tears. What is truly miraculous, I am thinking, is not so much the once-in-a-lifetime snatch from the jaws of death, not the revelatory insight that resolves every doubt, not the cataclysmic fulfillment of our desire to, once and for all, be "understood." It is the daily, minute-by-minute miracle of Christ made incarnate in every eye, every hand, the complicated depths of every human heart.

Suddenly, I see a new *retablo* on the wall of that odd little museum we just left. It is a painting of this very scene: these gold-green mountains in the distance, this blue enamel sky, Tim and me holding hands on this bench. In the upper right-hand corner the Virgin of Solitude, with her black habit and pedestal, hovers in a mysterious cloud of light and, underneath, it reads, "American tourist experiences moment of incoherent joy: *Gracias a Dios*, 1998." □

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Alberto Huerta

ROAD SHOW

Mexico's simmering crisis

On March 21, almost 3 million Mexicans cast ballots in an unofficial national referendum organized by Zapatista rebels. The initiative was intended to jump-start the moribund peace process in the southern state of Chiapas. That process was initiated following the 1994 uprising there, but negotiations between the Zapatistas and the government of President Ernesto Zedillo have stalled. According to the New York Times *(March 23), about 95 percent of the ballots cast supported the Zapatista initiative.*

To promote interest in the referendum, Zapatista supporters fanned out across Mexico. The Economist *(March 27), reported that the country "was awash with small, balaclava-clad Chiapans conducting a would-be plebiscite." Our contributor Alberto Huerta filed the following report from Guadalajara.*

It is March 22. I am standing in downtown Guadalajara, in Liberation Square, next to a stage. A small crowd is awaiting the return of 300 Zapatista representatives from their meetings with local citizens. A party is planned, much like the one the previous weekend when the Zapatistas, in their trademark wool ski masks, first arrived to "consult" with and inform Guadalajarans about the ongoing crisis in Chiapas. At that gathering, their message had been muddled somewhat by all the noise in the square from balloon vendors and playing children. The Zapatistas had been made to seem like just another Saturday evening traveling sideshow. The following day, I had attended several churches where the Zapatistas had set up tables and were attempting to distribute pamphlets. There was not much "consultation" going on, only outstretched hands from impoverished Zapatistas asking for funds to help pay for the trip home.

After a peaceful demonstration through the heart of the city, the first Zapatistas finally appear at the square. Only a small gathering is there to greet them, composed mostly of journalists and photographers. The first twenty *indios* to arrive are very young women and children. The rally organizer invites the crowd to chant, "We are with you," and the *indios* are made to line up like circus exhibits to be photographed in their ski masks and their native costumes. They seem lost and alone, and talk to no one. When I remark to a reporter that the whole scene reminds me of some new form of tourist promotion, he and the organizer become angry and start shoving me. A foreigner, not wanting to get involved in an altercation, I back away.

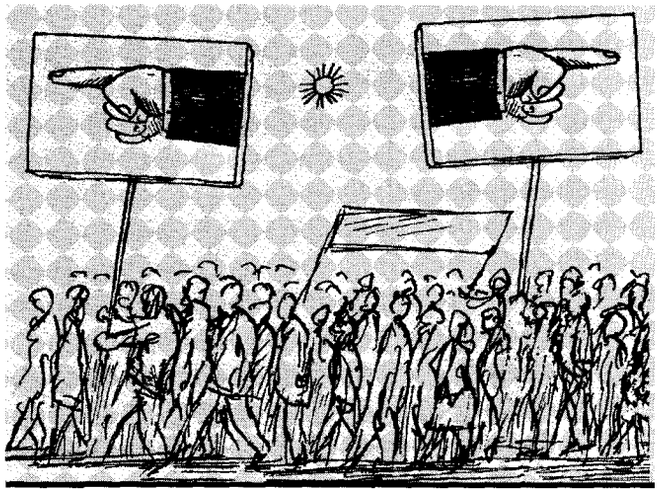
I eventually start a conversation with a university student standing near some park benches. He has returned from Chiapas only a few months before, and agrees that the display in the square seems like a burlesque. In repeated national polls, the Mexican people have reiterated that the Zedillo government should resolve the Chiapas crisis and pull out the 72,000 soldiers, half of Mexico's standing army, now occupying the state.

The student informs me that Chiapas is volatile and isolated, and that even he, a citizen, had to show four separate forms of identity to enter certain areas (his university I.D., voter card, passport, and birth certificate). If you are a foreigner, he tells me, you are not allowed beyond designated tourist areas, such as San Cristobal de las Casas. If you stray, Mexican immigration invites you out of the country. (Seven U.S. citizens were recently asked to leave Mexico following a peace demonstration in Chiapas.) The student adds that on his trip to the village of La Trinitaria, he saw an army convoy that consisted of forty-two buses with armed soldiers, a tank, and a reconnaissance helicopter overhead. The indigenous Maya, he says, are harassed constantly at recurrent army checkpoints. I hear the same story over and over.

The so-called "national consultation" sponsored by the Zapatistas was supposed to have been a referendum on Mexican approval of the accords of San Andres, negotiated in February 1996 between the Zedillo government and the Zapatistas. Those accords were supported by the National Mediation Committee, of which Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia of Chiapas was a key player. But, after years of stalling and circumvention by the government, the bishop resigned, and the committee itself dissolved last year. That leaves only the government and the Zapatistas, with no compelling intermediary trying to bring them together.

As I watch, more Zapatistas arrive but the crowd in the square has dwindled. A puppet show by university students holds the attention of a few. It depicts a wrestling match between a Zapatista and President Zedillo, who is nicknamed here "The Butcher." My friend the student voices what I am thinking: "I hope these 300 Zapatistas go back tonight, that they make it safely, and that they do not suffer any reprisals from the army and 'The Butcher' in Chiapas. □

Alberto Huerta *is associate professor in the department of modern and classical languages at the University of San Francisco in California.*



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FRANK SHEED ON THE STUMP

A loud voice & quick wit

Patrick J. O'Boyle

Speakers' Corner, near the Marble Arch in Hyde Park, might be thought of as London's tribute to free speech. It's the traditional forum for cranks and protesters, political pundits, purveyors of new philosophies, proponents of social reform of the right, left, and center, and—often—real or would-be apostles of a variety of religions. On Sunday afternoons, speaking sometimes to large audiences, prophets of doom call for repentance while there is still time, gurus proclaim "nirvana is now," and defenders of mainstream religion set forth their doctrinal wares.

In the 1940s, when I was often on hand to observe the proceedings, it was clear that one key to success in this apostolate was a loud voice; the size of the crowd around any particular speaker was determined as much by the capacity of his lungs as by the content of his message. A well-known Methodist preacher, the Rev. Donald Soper, always drew flocks of listeners, in large part because his acidic remarks on the modern Babylon, uttered in stentorian tones, reverberated through the portals of Marble Arch and up through trendy Oxford Street, no doubt astonishing passersby headed for the fleshpots of the West End.

Catholicism was made visible—and audible—at Speakers' Corner under the aegis of the Catholic Evidence Guild, founded shortly after World War I by Vernon Redwood, to expound church teachings in sidewalk milieux in a nation only 5 percent Catholic. Besides a strong voice, anyone who mounted the rostrum of the Catholic Evidence Guild in post-World War II London needed a quick wit and a thick skin. Hecklers in the crowd did not suffer fools (or mundane speakers) gladly. Agnosticism was rife, all of organized religion was under assault, the age of ecumenism was yet to dawn, and Catholicism was viewed with particular suspicion. Still, some of England's leading Catholic intellectuals braved the hostile audiences. Among them was the Irish Dominican Vincent McNabb, a brilliant and acerbic speaker who used to walk in his habit from the priory in N.W. London to Hyde Park every weekend—four miles in each direction. A learned man, McNabb could mud wrestle with the toughest East Ender.

For me, the C.E.G. speaker who stood out was Frank Sheed, the author and publisher. He certainly had the voice for the job, a great booming baritone that sent shock waves across the park, its resonance rising and falling like the breakers on his native Australian Barrier Reef. I first encountered him one Sunday afternoon in 1946, and for the next several years I contrived to be present whenever he was scheduled to speak.

Usually he was preceded at the lectern by his wife, Maisie Ward, who was also his partner in a unique Catholic publishing house, Sheed & Ward, based in London and New York. A slight, retiring-looking woman, she would mount the platform hesitantly, pausing to smile almost apologetically at the crowd even as it began to dwindle—who, after all, wanted to listen to a mere woman prattle about the mysteries of redemption? But the exodus halted as soon as she began to speak, for if her appearance was meek her language was incisive; one could understand why her biography of G.K. Chesterton had been acclaimed. As the warm-up act, she would often entertain with anecdotes, told with economy in her clipped upper-class accent, of famous personalities she had known—Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Ronald Knox.

The crowd would stir in anticipation as Sheed mounted

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the rostrum, doffing his Texas-style hat, his sparse locks in unruly disarray, his prominent proboscis and genial features giving the impression of an intellectual W.C. Fields. He was then in his fiftieth year, at the height of his intellectual powers. After a light-hearted comment or two, he would launch into his topic, gripping the lectern and leaning toward his listeners. He was a master pitchman, feeling the pulse of the crowd and using his voice to good effect, emphasizing a point with a change in cadence, driving home an argument with epigrams worthy of Oscar Wilde.

He could be devastating with hecklers. Once, after Sheed had described the extraordinary order and design to be seen in the universe, a persistent challenger retorted by pointing to all the world's ills, and ended by shouting, "I could make a better universe than your God!" "I won't ask you to make a universe," Frank replied. "But would you make a rabbit—just to establish confidence?" On another occasion, when he was discoursing on the modern obsession with pleasure, a scantily clad young woman launched into her high-kicking version of the can-can in front of the speaker's platform. Smiling benevolently and applauding, Frank responded, "Well done, my dear, but you know, London is full of legs," and continued with his lecture.

A more penetrating questioner was Edward Siderman, a slight, middle-aged Jew who had been a fixture in Hyde Park from the early days of the Guild. I got to know him pretty well at these meetings, for we rarely missed a Sunday session—I to listen, he to question. He must have spent the rest of the week thinking up abstruse questions on Catholic dogma, as evidenced by the blockbuster question he once put to Sheed: "Why did the Second Person of the Trinity become man as our redeemer, why not the Father or the Holy Ghost?"

Sheed beamed at him. "I'm delighted that you asked that question," he boomed. "And by the time I've given you an answer you'll probably be sorry you ever asked." He then launched into an erudite theological broadside to the effect that God the Son was the infinite product of the Father's intellect, while creation was the finite result. "It was only fitting," he concluded, "that this special relationship of infinite to finite, as embodied in the Second Person, should result in God the Son's becoming mankind's redeemer."

The crowd applauded, and I noted the slight smile of approval that crossed Siderman's usually impassive countenance. It's worth noting that Siderman often crossed swords with Vincent McNabb; frequently their intellectual combat would continue after the speaker had stepped down. In 1950, several years after the priest's death, Siderman wrote a remarkable book, *A Saint in Hyde Park*, in tribute to his adversary; fittingly, the introduction was by Frank Sheed. Many years later, in his final illness, Siderman was visited by friars from the Dominican priory. But he remained an agnostic to the end. Intellectually, he said, he was attracted to the church's teachings, but emotionally remained a cynic.

One reason for Sheed's ease and poise on the platform in Hyde Park was experience: He had first taken the platform

for the Catholic Evidence Guild in the early 1920s, and he kept it up for the next forty years, sometimes mounting a C.E.G. platform five times a week. A much-traveled man, he was at home on the dais, whether in Liverpool or Los Angeles, in New York, Chicago, or his native Sydney. With Maisie Ward, he compiled the speakers' training text for the C.E.G. in 1925.

Sheed also brought considerable learning and a gift for apt and understandable phrasing to the task. He was the author of some twenty books covering a wide spectrum—from sociology and apologetics to devotional and biographical works, as well as an excellent translation of Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. His best-known book, *Theology and Sanity*, gained the status of a classic, and no doubt had much to do with his reception of a doctorate in sacred theology from Rome, a high honor indeed. Sheed and Ward published many of the most illustrious Catholic writers of the time—among them Chesterton, Belloc, Knox, François Mauriac, and Fulton Sheen. But once, in 1956, when he took a bad fall from the rostrum in Hyde Park and was taken unconscious to a nearby hospital, the attending doctor asked the ambulance man who he was. "Some street-corner preacher," was the reply. "Oh," said the doctor, "they're all nuts."

Maisie Ward predeceased her husband, in 1975 at age eighty-six. Frank stayed on in their modest Jersey City apartment (they had moved permanently to the United States in the 1960s). He was still much in demand as a speaker, and still profoundly committed to his lifelong passion for making Catholicism better known and better understood. When he died in 1982 at eighty-five, thousands packed Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York to pay tribute to a genial, unpretentious man of immense energy and dedication, known affectionately to some as "God's ambassador." □

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Awaiting Results

The daymoon rising is an old oyster
shell, some bluff against time.
Nothing up close holds me,
and its blanched shape hardens
until only the body feels true,
malignancies forming from elsewhere.
Finding the bed made after breakfast,
I excuse myself for not recalling
having done it earlier: other
things to think of—smears
on glass slides, shadows against bone
in the darkroom of X-ray.
What might be preventable
becomes less clear,
while things that never really happened
flourish like a crop of dreams
out of what the mind chooses to keep.

Long ago, I imagined living
in a basement house like my cousins—
clear-booted visions of feet
moving past the mind's high windows,
dread of what approaches seeping through walls
like illness. Grown, I still heard sounds on the roof
of animals in from the hills.
And I wrote down long ago
the black and white texts of magpie feathers,
replenished perfect after each year's molting;
yet because my sister wrote of killing them,
stomping their nests, I imagine egg yolk
smeared on my shoes, a shudder
as I walked back past the barn
where old alfalfa smelled of decay.

There must be sense to make after decades
of what sprouts out from events
that didn't occur.... Like tentative
plots they twist off on their own,
affecting outcomes. These days,
books that have meant much
turn their backs on shelves, their story-lines
mulch into gibberish. At evening,
the sinking moon enlarges to a curved screen
playing my lives back, and after dark
the hay mower is still shearing down days
like timothy grass.

Turns of a Phrase

Recalling Lines from Dickinson

This time of year when the slant
of light draws birds toward our east panes,
when feathers cling to glass
and the occasional dazed sparrow
flies off again, I think of Emily.
How I got that clear vision
I don't recall: she's there, pale-skinned
in her white dress, straight-backed,
small, intent and without smile,
eyes that both give back and hold back.

The deep brocades of memory include
what's forgotten, and I move toward it.
The clearest image of my father's dying
remains the soft whiteness of his arms
in the hospital gown—skin more translucent
than an infant's—after long sleeves worn
through decades of farming. To the end,
he never had trouble sleeping.
These days before first light
I wonder if I'll reach the place
where I needn't write again
and again of my father,
needn't feel for some part of a past
waiting to be heightened, re-discovered
in its manifold shapes...

until as with all memory, in trusting a thing
not completely to be trusted, light slants
off the glass, dawn hits twice
and I walk between.

Dixie Partridge

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Richard Alleva

STANLEY KUBRICK

1928–99

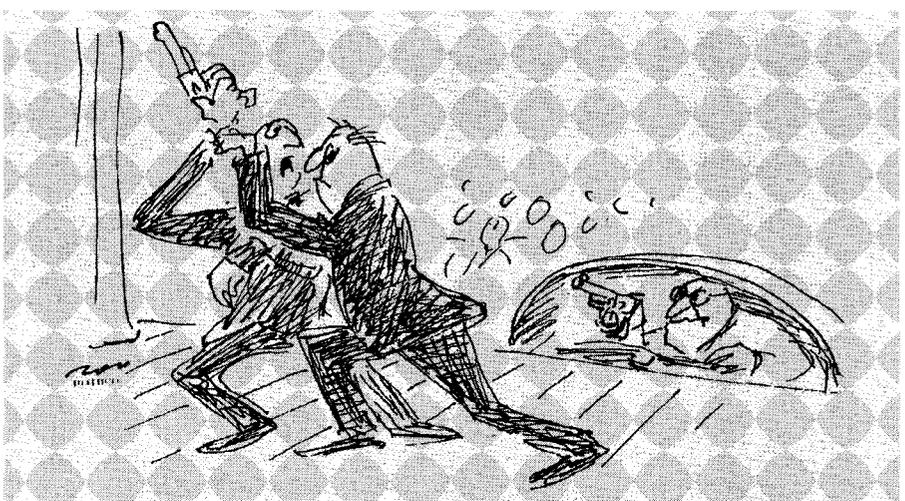
I bet Stanley Kubrick never had a nightmare while shooting a movie. Oh, I'm sure he had budgetary and logistic nightmares as any filmmaker must, but no oneiric, forehead-dampening visitations. How could he? Surely the process of putting his most disturbing thoughts and visions on celluloid must have cleared his mind. Though I don't envy the nights Kubrick may have had once each movie opened and he lapsed into those periods (growing longer as he got older) when he toyed with projects before committing his energies to them. While leafing through scripts, plot outlines, and optioned novels, was the man waiting for a demon to straddle him and let him know that it was time to get back to work?

Not many American filmmakers, living or dead, prompt this sort of speculation. Terrence Malick does, but he makes only one movie a decade. Martin Scorsese does, but he alternates deeply felt work with strictly commercial ventures. Most popular American directors—even the best of them, like Clint Eastwood and Steven Spielberg—tap into *our* dreams, nightmares, and fetishes, not their own. Since capital punishment is a recurrent hot topic in our culture, Eastwood *must* come round to making a movie about it, as he has just done with *True Crime*. I yield to none in my admiration of *Saving Private Ryan*, but, though its technique has the unmistakable Spielberg touch, the result is the cinematic equivalent of a public monument. A great public monument to be sure, but the difference between it and Malick's *The Thin Red Line* is the difference between nearly flawless rhetoric and flawed but memorable poetry.

After *Spartacus* (1960), Stanley Kubrick confined himself to poetry. His early work was thoroughly popular, even pulpy stuff to which, like Spielberg, he gave a personal flavor. *Killer's Kiss* (1955): gangster noir. *The Killing* (1956): big heist melodrama, similar to *The Asphalt Jungle*. *Fear and Desire* (1953) and *Paths of Glory* (1957): antiwar war movies. *Spartacus* (1960): sword-and-sandals, but livelier than *Ben-Hur*. Then Kubrick moved to England and began making his projects in studio sound stages that allowed him stricter control than he'd ever enjoyed before. To do what he wanted to do, he had to reject the outdoor world of natural light, shifting clouds, wind on water, and never-quite-controllable crowds. (After *Spartacus*, are there any real crowds in a Kubrick film?) In short, he rejected the possibilities of incorporating accidents into rehearsed drama, the sort of thing Robert Altman and Bernardo Bertolucci thrive on. That his films were now more personally conceived doesn't explain this shift. Woody Allen, after all, creates his personal vision of New York City while shooting in the real streets and terraces of that city. What was it about Kubrick's art that took him away from the natural world?

I'm looking at some stills from *Lolita*, not publicity shots snapped on the set between takes but actual freeze-frames. The cinematography is unmistakably Kubrickian (and remained so in all the films to come, no matter what cameraman he used). The darker tones are velvety, but the objects and actors are often seen in a soft, hazy, humid light. This is the way the world would look if the entire planet were under glass. It is the world as hothouse with the humans as carefully cultivated plants. An experiment in horticulture seems to be taking place. Is Kubrick trying to replace nature with his own version of nature?

Not that the characters are ever as passive as flowers. Kubrick's protagonists are all either control freaks or their victims, and the victims don't put up with much for long. Humbert Humbert schemes not only to seduce Lolita but to calibrate every minute of her day so she won't have a life apart from his. The mastermind criminal of *The Killing* has his underlings obey his timetable to the second during a racetrack heist. Dr. Strangelove and his Russian counterparts create bombs and counterbombs to control the course of the cold war. Barry Lyndon manipulates the greed and vanity of English aristocrats to engineer his social climb. The ghosts of *The Shining* turn Jack Nicholson into a maniac so he will kill at their bidding. The boot camp of *Full Metal Jacket* changes boys into supposedly disciplined killers. In a Kubrick film, a manipulator turns some sector of



***"Make it good. You know what a stickler for realism* he is!"**

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life into machinery, and into this machinery he inserts the people who serve his fantasies or his drive for power.

And then the machinery breaks down. Life cannot abide being turned into machinery. The breakdown plunges the manipulator into nightmare, but for Kubrick and the audience, it is a release from the nightmare of manipulation. Sterling Hayden, the chief schemer of *The Killing*, is as sympathetic as master criminals get, but when the suitcase containing the booty from his heist bursts open in the airport and $2 million in bills fly about in the tail wind of taxiing planes, the audience doesn't groan in sympathy for the likable Hayden but explodes into laughter. (I've seen the film in theaters as well as on video.) This laughter is the revenge of the life force against one who programs life to do his bidding. Similarly, when Humbert Humbert, though quite poignantly played by James Mason, is tormented by his rival, Clare Quilty, the audience laughs in support of Quilty, not just because of Peter Sellers's hip performance but because Quilty is the undoer of schemes, the thwarter of domestic and sexual tyranny. (That he turns out to be a manipulator himself lays on the irony.) And when those bombs drop at the end of *Dr. Strangelove* to the tune of "We'll Meet Again," the audience again laughs. All those missile-defense programs, all that "thinking about the unthinkable," all those stratagems and counterstrategems—gone at one stroke as the world blows up! What a relief!

Sometimes the void left by the destruction of schemes is filled by a quality not usually considered a Kubrickian characteristic but present in most of his movies: compassion. Defeated, Humbert finds himself still in love with Lolita, even though she's no longer a little girl. His love has survived his perversion and, rather than take revenge on her for her escape from him, he ensures her future happiness. Barry Lyndon loses his bid to rise in society because of the interference of his stepson, whom Lyndon then has a chance to kill in a duel. But the death of his little boy in a riding accident has taught Lyndon pity and he's unable to pull the trigger at the duel's crucial moment. This pity costs Barry his leg, but the audience recognizes that Barry has become a better man.

2001: A Space Odyssey is Kubrick's ultimate portrayal of the consequences of manipulation, yet also an exception to the rest of his work. Here, mankind's lust for mastery leads to the exploration of the solar system, but exploration takes the astronaut hero to the point where he—and mankind in general—are helpless, and God must take over to launch mankind into its next stage. Kubrick once said that this film "finally postulates what is little less than a scientific definition of God." I think the word "scientific" is hubristic in regard to a movie or any work of art, but Kubrick and his scriptwriter, Arthur C. Clarke, do present God as the ultimate scientist constantly refining his laboratory creation, the human race. Obviously, this is the one act of manipulation we must root for.

Kubrick was often accused of being a control freak himself, laboring over his movies for years only to produce unspontaneous, airless results. I myself thought this of *Barry Lyndon* at first look, but subsequent viewings have disclosed both the film's sardonic wit and, in the final reels, its barely murmured compassion. The effect of spontaneity is wonderful in art, whether it's in a Chekhov story or a Rogers and Hart song or a Robert Altman movie. But also wonderful, though less immediately ingratiating, are the pleasures of multilayered artifice in a Shakespeare sonnet or a Nabokov novel or a Stanley Kubrick movie.

Still, I'm not surprised that a director as daring as Kubrick finally felt challenged to enter a realm where control cannot even be attempted, much less accomplished: the world of sexual dreams in Arthur Schnitzler's novella, *Dream Story*, which Kubrick filmed as *Eyes Wide Shut*, to be released next summer. It turned out to be his last effort. I look forward to losing sleep over it. □

ART

Donna Gustafson

UNDER THE COVERS

Getty's passion at the Morgan

Some books, especially beautiful, well-crafted ones, have a history all their own. The current exhibit at New York's Morgan Library of bibliophile Sir Paul Getty's extraordinary private collection, the "Wormsley Library," will arouse the curiosity, not to mention the covetousness, of any book lover. We learn, among countless other things, that Getty's annotated copy of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* once belonged to Ben Jonson, and we see by way of Jonson's underlinings and commentary how one literary mind read another. On display nearby is the psalter made for Anne Boleyn in 1529–32 and decorated by an anonymous artist known as the Master of the Ango Hours. The volume's decorations, keyed to Anne's current state and future ambitions, reflect her position as mistress, but not yet queen to Henry VIII. Henry, you will recall, was trying to persuade Pope Clement VII to annul his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Since Anne was unable to employ the royal insignia officially herself, the artist incorporated Henry's monogram with Anne's first initial and the arms granted to her father in 1525.

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Boleyn seems to have had as keen a sense of anticipation as the next Mr. Elizabeth Taylor.

Another highlight of this selection from Getty's library is what we learn about William Morris, leader of the arts and crafts movement in England and founder of the Kelmscott Press. Morris had read and re-read his French translation of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* so often that it had to be rebound. Who could imagine that scientific materialism could be such compelling reading for a poet and craftsman? Morris was a man of prodigious energy and remarkable industry who spent his few hours of leisure (typically Sunday mornings) translating Icelandic sagas into English and practicing calligraphic writing. After that, reading *Das Kapital* must have seemed like a cakewalk or a mere bourgeois vice. Morris was, of course, a connoisseur of fine books. The rebound *Le Capital* is strikingly beautiful, which is not surprising, since the politically engaged Morris was determined to change the industrial world by way of art.

Many of us own collections of books that we would be loath to describe as libraries. Rather, we have accumulated them during a lifetime of reading, as haphazard as that may be. But as this exhibition makes clear, Getty is drawn, not simply to the intellectual satisfactions of books, but to the physical pleasures a well-made book affords.

It is only since the end of the fifteenth century that printed books have been available and of interest to a relatively wide public. In previous centuries, books were copied by scribes and embellished with illustrations in gold and costly pigments for royal and highly placed ecclesiastical patrons. Lisa Jardine's *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (1996) locates the triumph of the book squarely in the fifteenth-century Renaissance. The Renaissance, by definition, put great stock in classical learning, and valued manuscripts, books, and the collecting of both. Merchant princes like Cosimo de Medici (the Florentine patriarch) built palaces and created libraries with the aid of specialized advisors. His "librarian," Vespasiano da Bisticci, employed forty-five scribes whose task it was to copy manuscripts and books that were unavailable at any price. These forty-five copyists completed two hundred volumes in twenty-two months.

As the demand for books grew, printing and distribution became profitable ventures. At first, however, printed books emulated the artistry of the earlier hand-written manuscripts. A typical edition of a work would include a small number of books printed on vellum (prepared animal skin) and a larger portion printed on paper. Vellum was the choice of bibliophiles of means, and would be purchased unbound; the buyer would then commission luxurious leather covers decorated by an artist. Paper volumes were purchased by scholars, students, and book lovers with more modest resources. The distinction continues today with paperback and cloth-bound books destined for different audiences.

Books, of course, are never simply objects of beauty and this exhibition also features some of the greatest works of Western civilization. Among the choices included in the selection of approximately one hundred books and single pages are a medieval biography of Thomas Becket, a 1472 edition of the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder, a first edition (published in 1476–77) of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *The Fables of Aesop* (1794), William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1805), a deluxe folio of the Magna Charta (published on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of its signing) and two copies (one on vellum, one on paper) of one of the most glorious books printed in modern times, the Kelmscott Press's *Chaucer* (1896). Also included in the Morgan exhibit are books of maps, mathematics, and architectural studies. Eccentric and wonderful works like Hjalmar Fincham's *A Book of Observations on the Plant and Animal Life Inhabiting Pond Water*, illuminated by the author in 1938 and bound in 1978, help round out the exhibition.

"Wormsley Library: A Personal Selection by Sir Paul Getty," which runs through May 2, presents a rare opportunity to peruse the history of fine bookmaking from approximately A.D. 620 to contemporary times. Locked beneath glass, the gorgeous illuminated manuscripts and finely crafted book bindings remind us that books are sometimes works of art in themselves as well as artifacts of historical value. While it is certainly true that you can't judge a book by its cover, there are times when you need look no further than the binding to understand that you are in the presence of the extraordinary. □

Donna Gustafson *is the curator of exhibitions at the American Federation of the Arts.*

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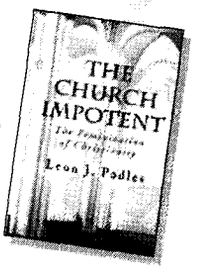

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Curiosity, humor & courtesy

Daria Donnelly

I know a successful MIT graduate who regularly trawls the children's section of his local public library for books about language, nature, geography, and history. For himself. So many delights for the eye and mind, so much understanding offered in so appealing a form. There may be well-placed anxiety about trends in juvenile nonfiction, but the feast remains astonishing.

As baby boomers, my siblings and I were lucky to grow up with masterpieces of visual information: Holling Clancy Holling's 1941 *Paddle-to-the-Sea* (Houghton Mifflin, $8.95); H. A. Rey's 1954 *Find the Constellations* (Houghton Mifflin, $9.95, 72 pp.); Miroslav Sasek's 1959 *This Is Paris* (sixteen *This Is* titles, Macmillan, out of print); Virginia Lee Burton's evolutionary 1962 *Life Story* (Houghton Mifflin, $9.95, 67 pp.); and Richard Scarry's 1968 *What Do People Do All Day?* (Random House, $14).

These were great books then, and they are great books today. They teach me what to look for in selecting new informational books: engaging writing; miniature-friendly graphics; narrative design that allows children to progress in understanding; illustrations which secure the connections between the big picture and local phenomena. In a nutshell: broad, deep, and original presentation. Too many new informational books (produced by a more consolidated trade industry less committed to nonfiction and hybrid works) are hastily conceived, emphasize eye-grabbing pictures over organization, and project an "attitude" about learning onto children. So, caution!

For the past year, I have been gathering such instructive works of fiction and nonfiction, and have been sorting them into two piles. The books in my first stack are sometimes called "informational" literature. These deal with natural and social phenomena, historical events, and mental constructs concerning space and quantity. In the second pile are books which attempt to model virtuous behavior, mainly through imaginative stories. (William Bennett's *Children's Book of Heroes* is perhaps the best-known recent example.) These piles collapse upon one another physically and conceptually, our moral imaginations being inextricable from the world, and our moral lives sharpened by attention to it.

My favorite contemporary information artist is David Macaulay. Famous for his books on architecture (*Cathedral, Mill, Unbuilding*, etc.), Macaulay has just updated his award-winning work on the principles and workings of machines with a new sixty-three-page section on inventions of the digital age. In *The New Way Things Work* (Houghton Mifflin, $35, 400 pp.), Macaulay, assisted by Neil Ardley, presents the principle of binary digits (or bits) and the machines that use them—personal computers, robots, cash machines, supermarket scanners, and so forth. He does so with amazing clarity and idiosyncratic humor. What makes both the new and the original *The Way Things Work* so great is not only Macaulay's consistent movement from principles to applications and imaginative presentation of difficult concepts, but his daring mix of physical scales and his effortless use of an incongruous woolly mammoth to explicate everything from screws to holography.

Another fabulous artist of information is Japanese illustrator Mitsumasa Anno, who has made many excellent picture books on mathematics. In 1997, PaperStar republished his *Anno's Math Games I, II, III* (each volume $12.95, 103 pp.), which present mathematical concepts, such as classification, measurement, and proportion, in the form of appealing visual games. Both Anno and Macaulay make more "whimsical" picture books which solicit and repay a child's careful attention to detail. My favorites are the wordless 1977 *Anno's Journey* (PaperStar, $5.95) and Macaulay's 1995 coincidence-packed *Shortcut* (Houghton Mifflin, $15.95).

A new science novel, *Tibaldo and the Hole in the Calendar*, by theoretical physicist and philosopher Abner Shimony (illustrated by Jonathan Shimony, Copernicus, $21, 165 pp.), is highly recommended for older readers (ten and up). Within a narrative about an intelli-

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gent and resourceful young boy who will lose his twelfth birthday as a result of the 1582 Gregorian calendar reform, Shimony comprehensibly presents the astronomical calculations behind that reform. The novel is a wonderfully full portrait of the cultural and scientific milieu of sixteenth-century Italy. We learn about social class, medical practices, educational institutions, political events, women's roles, the uneasy relationship of astrology to astronomy, and the social, intellectual, and political role of the church. Given that the study of science in schools is so often conducted in isolation from its history, I think that children would be thrilled to read about such a dramatic period and instance of science in action.

Recent history books of note are Diane Stanley's picture book *Joan of Arc* (Morrow Junior Books, $16), Wilborn Hampton's *Kennedy Assassinated! The World Mourns: A Reporter's Story* (Candlewick, $17.99, 96 pp.), and Joy Hakim's ten-volume *A History of US* (Oxford, paper, $10.95 each). Stanley, a historian rather than a hagiographer, tells the story of Joan in fascinating detail. Her illuminated-manuscript-style illustrations are beautiful, and the map of France in 1429, guide to French pronunciation, and bibliographies for readers of varying ages, are very helpful.

Like *Joan of Arc*, the absolutely riveting *Kennedy Assassinated!* should provoke conversation between parents and children about vocation, grace under pressure, and the workings of powerful institutions. Hampton, now an editor with the *New York Times*, was a cub reporter in the Dallas UPI office when the call came that three shots had been fired at President Kennedy's motorcade. In terse journalistic prose, Hampton tells a new generation what happened that day, and the part he played in getting the story. The rough and tumble antics of a fiercely competitive predigital news industry, especially juxtaposed to such a grave event, make for fascinating reading. The story is illustrated with black-and-white photographs suitable (with the exception of page 79, Oswald's face, the instant before he was shot by Ruby) for most children age eight and older.

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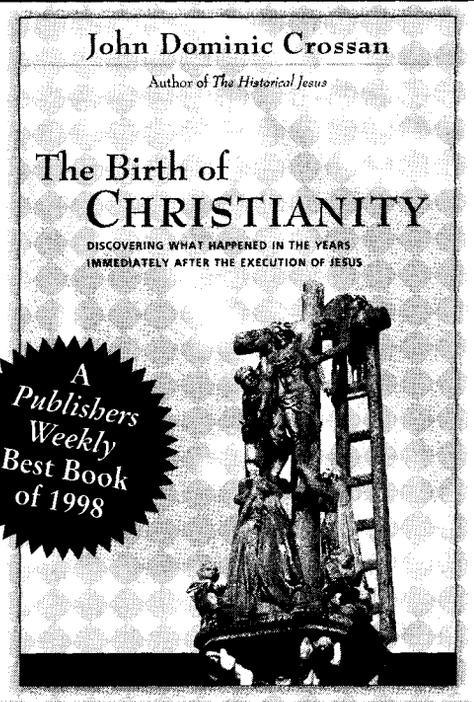
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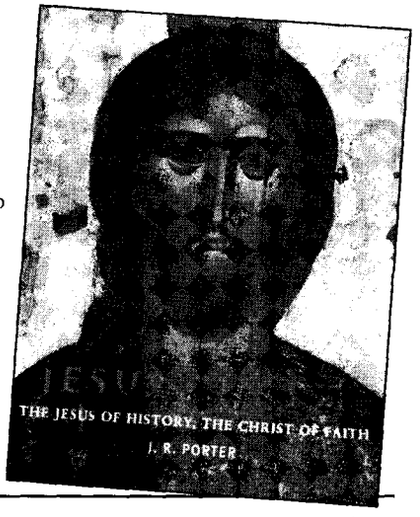

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I first learned about Joy Hakim's *The History of US* from an impassioned essay, "The Betrayal of History," by Alexander Stille in the June 11, 1998 *New York Review of Books*. Read it and use it to advocate for better textbooks for children. Why can't Johnny read? Because his books—written by committees hired by timid publishers trying to please and appease too many adult constituencies—are unreadable. Joy Hakim, a former teacher and journalist, was so frustrated by the quality of history textbooks that she wrote her own. Hakim calls herself a "storytelling historian," and boy! does she know how to tell a story. Her ten-volume work is superlatively written and radiant with the interest of history. It has been a huge hit with both children and professional historians, who have particularly praised Hakim's sense of proportion in selecting and organizing material. Oxford initially printed only 8,000 copies: over a million copies have already been sold. Let's hope their assent to Hakim's multivolume presentation (each well-designed volume fits comfortably on a child's lap) signals the demise of the doorstop textbook.

Other fine new informational books in brief: Physician and photographer David L. Parker's *Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children* (Lerner, $19.95, 112 pp.) is a sobering and well-organized introduction to contemporary child labor. Gertrud Mueller Nelson's *A Walk through Our Church* (Paulist, $14.95, 57 pp.) introduces young children to Catholic liturgical objects. *Beni's Family Treasury* (Henry Holt, $18.95, 115 pp.) collects five of Jane Breskin Zalben's beautifully illustrated portraits of the Jewish holidays.

I divided my other stack of books, written to model virtuous behavior, into books designed to instruct overtly, and those whose instruction is covert. The overt book is hard to do well, and I do not recommend William Bennett's collections for children, because the quality of poems and stories he offers is so uneven. Bennett's desire to provide a set of heroes alternative to those offered by contemporary popular culture can only be applauded, but his selections in *The Children's Book of Heroes* (Simon and Schuster, $21, 110 pp.) seem informed more by ideological and political agenda (amelioration in race relations, moms at home, voluntarism instead of government programs) than by the rich variety and beauty of heroic tales that Western culture offers. I was stunned that the same Laura Richards who wrote the great nonsense poem "Eletelephony" was capable of a story as maudlin as "About Angels." Every Bennett hero is obedient, and, in instances where not entirely nice, Bennett cuts off the tale before things get nasty: so sail Theseus and Ariadne into the sunset.

"I'm not coming out tonight—I'm frightened of meeting unruly children."

Robert Ellsberg's *All Saints* (Crossroad, $19.95, 576 pp.), by contrast, is a marvelous book of heroes for both young people and adults because it shows the variety of ways one can live a life of "heroic sanctity." Written from a Catholic perspective, this is not a conventional Catholic compendium of saints: Ellsberg includes holy men and women from other faiths and even non-religious moralists like Albert Camus. Among the 365 men and women whose life stories Ellsberg tells so well you will find activists and contemplatives, poets and politicians, saints of obedience and saints of rebellion. The sweet-tempered, the self-righteous, the calm, and the neurotic all have the capacity for holiness. That is a powerful message for young people, who will also learn a lot of history by reading these biographies.

Theologian and ethicist Vigen Guroian's *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination* (Oxford, $22, 198 pp.) discusses moral themes in select children's stories for parents and teachers who wish to use such stories to nurture the moral life of children. His theological readings of (among others) *Pinocchio*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *The Princess and the Goblin* are very fine and well-seasoned with the views of thinkers as varied as G.K. Chesterton, Martin Buber, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and Robert Coles. While Guroian convincingly reasserts the moral depth of the Victorian imagination, his stress on present-day cultural decline is unfortunate. It allows him to dismiss too easily the ambiguities that distinguish these aesthetically and morally compelling stories, and the turmoil of emotions we experience while reading them. I found his concluding bibliographical essay a helpful guide to selecting additional stories.

Written from a pyschoanalytic perspective, Ellen Handler Spitz's *Inside Picture Books* (Yale, $25, 225 pp.) also argues that books play a central role in a child's moral development. Reading aloud is a momentous activity: In the company of a loving adult, a child enters an imaginary world and takes the measure of this one. Picture books help children deal with powerful feelings like fear, sorrow, anger. They encourage empathy and self-understanding. They give a child a sense of possibility and also limitation. I was grateful for the balance Spitz maintained between a firm trust in imaginative literature and awareness of the subtle gender roles that girls and boys are learning in some of their earliest picture books. Because of her faith in the imagination, her hesitations, and her excellent taste, Spitz's selection and analysis of books in four picture-book subjects—bedtime, loss, anger, self-acceptance—are strong and provide a good model for choosing among the contemporary offerings that she so dis-

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appointingly neglects.

I was particularly sorry that Spitz passed over Barbara Cooney, whose epic presentations of a whole human life—in the acclaimed 1985 *Miss Rumphius* and 1988 *Island Boy* (both Puffin, $5.99) among others—are so unusual and so suffused with moral interest. Cooney's quiet attention to life at all ages makes her akin to Tomie dePaola. His wonderful 1973 *Nana Upstairs* and *Nana Downstairs*, well-described by Spitz, has just come back into print (Putnam, $15.99). In a similarly quiet mode, English artist Shirley Hughes offers picture book stories about a fetching contemporary English boy named Alfie, whose family and neighbors are living lives of ordinary virtue. Her most recent is *Alfie and the Birthday Surprise* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, $16). Because Alfie is growing up with the series, start with her 1994 collection, *All about Alfie* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, $18).

When American nonsense poet Gelett Burgess created the weird loose-limbed "Goops" in 1900, he fathered the droll book of virtues. This particularly American genre wears its instruction lightly, and reports that being good is at least as much fun as making mischief and infinitely more stylish. The present master of this genre is William Steig, whose recently reprinted 1972 chapter book *Dominic* is for the ages (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, $4.95, 146 pp.). Steig, still going strong at ninety, has always known that a child's moral life depends on a sense of humor, a large imagination, and a joy in language. You will never see as many underemployed words in a child's book again (unless it's in his own hilarious *Farmer Palmer's Wagon Ride*). Every Steig book is radiant with the values of endurance, forgiveness, humility, and joy. His most recent picture book, *Pete's a Pizza* (HarperCollins, $13.95), affirms once again that with a little imagination you can turn straw into gold, or Pete into a pizza: and voila! the young lad's bad mood is also transformed.

Another genius working in the comic tradition was the late great James Marshall, whose stories about an unforgettable pair of hippopotami have been collected in one volume: *George and Martha: The Complete Stories of Two Best Friends* (Houghton Mifflin, $25, 340 pp.). Marshall had a deep appreciation of friendship, that capacity we all have to accommodate each other's foibles and idiosyncrasies. Hilarious and tender, impeccably timed and delightfully understated, Marshall's George and Martha stories are modern classics.

More recently, Kevin Henkes has reinvigorated the "situation" virtue book. Parents in flight from the Berenstain Bears will appreciate his personality-filled mice. While gently mocking the latest behavior-modification methods, such as the time-out chair, Henkes helps parents help their young children learn to recognize and accommodate other people's feelings. *Chester's Way* (1988, Greenwillow, $16), *Julius: The Baby of the World* (1990, Mulberry, $4.95), and *Lilly and the Purple Plastic Purse* (1996, Greenwillow, $15) are household favorites.

If you can get only one children's book this year, make it William McCleery's 1947 *Wolf Story* (book design and illustration by Warren Chappell, Linnet Press, $16.50, 82 pp.). This "underground classic" finds an inventive and exasperated father telling a wolf story to end all wolf stories (so he hopes) to his inventive and demanding young son. Dramatist McCleery perfectly captures the irritation, affection, tricks, admiration, and sheer surprise that pass back and forth between parent and child in everyday family life. It is in similar improvisational exchanges that we—adults and children—learn how to love.

Read *Wolf Story* both for itself and as an antidote to the current hyperbolic sense of crisis in morality and attendant calls for more explicit and formulaic moral instruction. In 1947, at the very moment when the evidence of man's capacity for evil was fresh and staggering, McCleery offered his own child a book with a very modest lesson: curiosity, humor, and courtesy keep the mind just and heart generous. □

Daria Donnelly *writes regularly on children's books for* Commonweal. *She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

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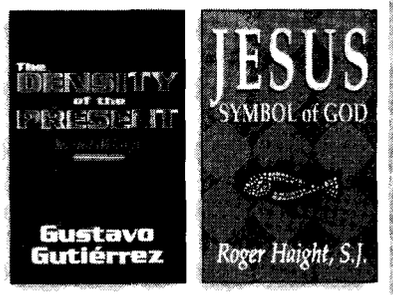

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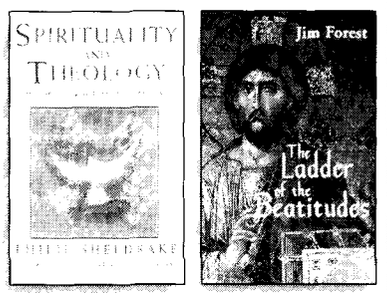

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One thing missing

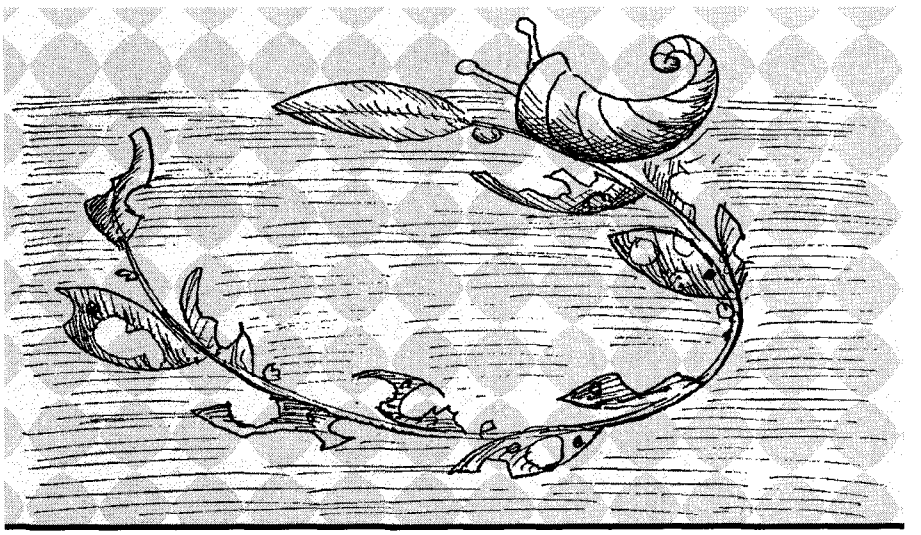
Evensong
Gail Godwin
Ballantine Books, $25, 405 pp.

Elizabeth Kirkland Cahill

Evensong, which chronicles several pivotal weeks in the life of a young Southern Episcopal priest, appears to have several things going for it. Time and place augur well: Advent 1999 in a western North Carolina mountain town provides the sturdy frame of a reflective liturgical season, the added intensity of premillennial anticipation, and the small, close-knit community of good old Southern folks. Richer still, the priest in question is a woman, which will be interesting to many readers, timely to some, novel to others. This is not Godwin's first time up to the plate with this particular protagonist: *Evensong* is a sequel to the highly regarded *Father Melancholy's Daughter* (1991). The publicity machine for the book has been formidable—interviews, full-page ads in national publications, and readings in bookstores from Asheville to Greenwich.

In the face of all this it feels churlish, downright un-Episcopalian, not to praise the book. Still, although raised Episcopalian, as a Catholic convert I am no longer strictly bound by the Anglican code of conduct, so I can say it: *Evensong* disappoints. I waited, patiently, for the narrative to engage me. I watched, hopefully, for the characters to move me. And I wished, fervently, for the writing to arouse my enthusiasm. Instead, I found myself in agreement with the young man in the novel who observes, "Well, I for one...will be glad when this wearisome millennium pageant is over."

Margaret Bonner is rector of All Saints High Balsam, a "plum parish" in a Smoky Mountain resort town. Her husband, Adrian Bonner, also a priest, serves as chaplain at Fair Haven, a progressive school for emotionally troubled teenagers. On the eve of the millennium, all is not well in High Balsam, or in Margaret's marriage. The peaceful summer-resort community has suffered a number of unsettling, even violent events—arson, murder, betrayal, all of which point, perhaps, to premillennial socio-economic implosion. In the midst of all this communal trouble, Margaret is privately questioning her marriage to the middle-aged, dour, monastic Adrian.



Into the lives of Margaret and Adrian come three strangers seeking hospitality. First up is Tony, an aging itinerant monk of suspicious habit and uncertain motive. No sooner does Margaret offer him a place to sleep than Chase Zorn, the disaffected son of a theme park entrepreneur and a protégée of Adrian's, gets kicked out of Fair Haven for drinking and comes to live with the Bonners. Tony and Chase may be intended to remind us of the angels whom Abram and Sarah entertain unawares (a parallel that extends to a joyful and unexpected pregnancy at the book's end). When they join up with the troubled Adrian, though, they bear more resemblance to a trinity of prodigals: Tony, the prodigal father, Adrian, the prodigal husband, and Chase, the prodigal son.

The third visitor to High Balsam, in her own way also a prodigal, is the fiery evangelist Grace Munger, who has come back to her childhood town to organize a Millennial Birthday March for Jesus. Margaret, like a sensible Episcopalian, wants nothing to do with it, and her spirited attacks on Grace's brand of fundamentalism constitute some of the better moments of the novel. "Nothing is going to change significantly in this community, or any other," Margaret declares, "until each of us makes room for God's kingdom inside ourselves and lets it change us from within....The nearest thing to a manifesto [Jesus] ever expressed was love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself."

In the midst of all the turmoil, Mar-

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garet handles her daily priestly work with care and concern, presiding at a wedding, ministering to a tourist whose husband has unexpectedly died, noting the gradual mental failure of an Altar Guild stalwart. Godwin accurately conveys the details and atmosphere of a Southern Episcopal parish. I liked the description of the 8 A.M. Sunday morning service: "a few determined souls setting forth in the first light to go and sit on wooden pews in an old brick building with . . . a few special objects that focused their attention on something timeless they were drawn to, whether they understood it or not."

There's really just one thing missing from the picture of Margaret as a priest. It is God. Throughout her troubles, the small vexations as well as the near tragedies, Margaret seems to lack connection to the God she has presumably been called to serve. "Where is God for you, if you don't mind my asking?" inquires the suddenly widowed tourist in whom Margaret has confided during the drive from the hospital to the woman's hotel. Margaret replies, "Right now? Definitely in the car as we talk and exchange things." With an answer like this, she might as well have been a social worker. Margaret has found a perfect partner in Adrian, who savors pancakes "that melt like hosts in your mouth," and defines sin as: "A falling short from your totality....Choosing to live in ways that interfere with the harmony of that totality." This is a far cry from the prose or the theology of the Book of Common Prayer, through which Episcopalians confess that "we have erred and strayed from our ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws."

The dialogue is stilted, and largely undifferentiated among the characters. It is unlikely that even a *very intelligent* adolescent would utter the sentence which Chase declaims to Adrian about the school's purpose: "To provide a *fair haven*, in the full sense of what both words can mean, for messes like me, until we can find our own structures and learn how to think and feel." Infelicitous metaphors mar the text. I'll skip most of the one that compares New York City to bouillabaisse ("the whole brew bobbed with equal chunks of splendor and desolation"), and simply cite Margaret's unspoken prayer over her husband's sleeping, feverish form: "Let spaciness be your air bag against the impact of too-sudden clarity." Ouch.

Godwin, or someone in her employ, evidently did a lot of research. Somewhere there must be a warehouse full of index cards: here is what the fire chief said about how fires spread, here are the Advent notes from the female priest in North Carolina, here are the suggestions about Chase's character development made by the boys from Christ School. Unfortunately, Godwin fails to integrate all of these wonderful notes into a work of imagination or transcendence, and leaves them to float on the surface of the novel, not unlike those bobbing chunks in the bouillabaisse. □

Elizabeth Kirkland Cahill *is co-author (with Joseph Papp) of* Shakespeare Alive!

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Luxury Fever
Why Money Fails to Satisfy in an Era of Excess
Robert H. Frank
The Free Press, $25, 328 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

Over the past two decades, the gap between the richest Americans and the poorest has grown and the real income of the average middle-class family has decreased. A few are getting richer, then, and most are becoming poorer. Nevertheless, members of the middle class, as well as the rich, seem to be living in larger houses, taking longer vacations, and spending more at the shopping malls. Robert H. Frank makes an interesting case for seeing a connection between the growing inequality in distribution of wealth and income and the national spending binge.

In an earlier book, *The Winner-Take-All Society* (1995), Frank and his co-author Phillip Cook argued that the enormous income gains of America's top earners during the 1980s were the result of the emergence of "winner-take-all" markets—labor markets in which small differences in performance produce huge differences in income. Now, Frank maintains that this inequality promotes conspicuous consumption. As the rich grow richer, they display their wealth, setting an example for everyone else, causing expectations to rise. Also, the very competitiveness of the winner-take-all market encourages luxurious display. The lawyer or executive who wears an expensive watch and an Italian suit, by showing emblems of success, stands a better chance of getting the one high-paying job than the competitor who wears a cheap timepiece and buys clothes off the rack. Frank argues that the excessive spending may be wise for individuals, because it improves the chance of winning the top place, but foolish for society as a whole, since it pushes resources into silk suits and diamond watches rather than into more useful commodities and savings.

Indulgence is not making Americans any happier, Frank argues, because they have to put more time and effort into paying for their high-priced goods. In addition, happiness is a matter of relative living standards, not absolute living standards. The individual in the largest hut in a small village feels wealthy and content. The person with the smallest mansion on the block feels poor and dissatisfied.

Thus, surveys of subjective happiness do not indicate any notable increase in perceived well-being during the years that our expenditures have grown. In fact, the expenditures may be making us less happy because they are diverting funds from areas of investment that actually could improve the quality of life. More time for exercise and enjoyment, cleaner air and water, and better-maintained highways could raise the general level of satisfaction, if only we weren't putting so many of our resources into conspicuous and competitive consumption.

Frank's prescription for luxury fever will sound heretical to many in these antigovernment days. The illness, he believes, calls for steeply progressive taxes. Instead of taxes on all income, though, he argues that we should tax consumption. This would address one of the chief criticisms of progressive taxation, that it discourages investment, while leading to a leveling down of spending on luxuries. Frank offers an intriguing approach to a consumption tax. Instead of keeping track of each household's expenditures, we should simply exempt a certain portion of income (he recommends $7,500 per person) from taxes. This would be the amount needed to maintain each household at a basic level. Beyond that, he would consider all income that is spent rather than invested as consumption. Investments would be completely free from taxes and other income would be taxed at rates that would be low for households of modest means but that would rise steeply as household income rises.

Robert Frank has written an appealing, provocative book that provides a new perspective on luxury spending. His writing is clear and compelling and he demonstrates how economists can make good use of information from other fields, such as social psychology. He also makes a strong case for a system of taxation that might be preferable in many ways to the current one. Still, his argument is not completely convincing for a number of reasons.

First, I think rising spending on consumption may be due to the historical inflation of expectations, rather than to the competitiveness of a winner-take-all economy. Each generation expects a higher standard of living than the generation before it, even when ability to pay for it is actually declining.

Second, while spending on some types of goods may indeed be socially and economically undesirable, discouraging spending in general may be unwise because economies of mass production are driven by demand. Modern economic crises tend to be crises of over-production, of productive capacities outpacing demand. A massive consumption tax might lead people to cut back on their buying, causing businesses to shrink and lay off workers who would lose purchasing power and be forced to cut back even further, leading to a downward spiral.

Third, even a highly progressive tax on consumption could be regressive in its effects. Both extravagant cars and children's music lessons are luxuries, involving spending beyond necessity. A very wealthy family may use only a tiny portion of its income for a Porsche, while a family of modest means devotes a much larger percentage of its disposable income to educational enrichment. Even if we assume the former family pays a much heavier tax on

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its luxury, who would be harder hit by taxes on spent income? Further, wealth in the United States is already far more unequally distributed than income. If we exempted all investment from taxation, wouldn't this lead to an even greater gap between those who own and those who earn? □

Carl L. Bankston III *teaches in the department of sociology and anthropology at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.*

MATERIAL PRINCIPLE

Rock of Ages
Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life
Stephen Jay Gould
Library of Contemporary Thought (Ballantine), $18.95, 222 pp.

Phillip E. Johnson

In October 1996 Pope John Paul II sent a statement on biological evolution to the Papal Academy of Sciences. After some general remarks, John Paul observed that Pius XII's encyclical *Humani generis* in 1950 had described the theory of evolution as "a serious hypothesis," worthy of in-depth study and not contrary to the Catholic faith—provided that it was not presented as certain, proven doctrine, and that it did not purport to displace entirely the role of revelation in questions of origins. John Paul updated that judgment, saying that since 1950 discoveries have been made in a variety of fields which support the theory, so that now evolution should be regarded as more than merely a hypothesis. "The convergence, neither sought nor fabricated, of the results of work that was conducted independently is in itself a significant argument in favor of the theory."

Rock of Ages is basically a heavily padded version of an essay that Stephen Jay Gould wrote about the pope's statement for his regular column in *Natural History* magazine. Gould quotes the part of the statement summarized above to support his interpretation that John Paul accepts evolution as "effectively proven fact." Gould ignores the remainder of the statement, which takes a different direction. The pope went on to say that the theory of evolution is not merely derived from data but also "borrows certain notions from natural philosophy." Next, he added that "rather than the theory of evolution, we should speak of several theories of evolution. On the one hand, this plurality has to do with the different explanations advanced for the mechanism of evolution, and on the other, with the various philosophies on which it is based. Hence the existence of materialist, reductionist, and spiritualist explanations."

Finally, John Paul carried over from *Humani generis* one very specific limitation on evolutionary thinking: "Theories of evolution which, in accordance with the philosophies inspiring them, consider the spirit as emerging from the forces of living matter or as a mere epiphenomenon of this matter, are incompatible with the truth about man." In the original essay, but not this book, Gould took note of the pope's "insistence on divine infusion of the soul," and described it as a concept having "metaphorical value," but which he personally suspects to be "a device for maintaining a belief in human superiority within an evolutionary world offering no privileged position to any creature."

What was the pope getting at? Gould thinks that Pius XII allowed consideration of evolution only reluctantly, with the hope that the theory would be discredited, whereas John Paul realizes that evolution is now so heavily supported by scientific evidence that even devout Christians must accept it unreservedly. Gould goes on from this premise to the conclusion that the church seems to have accepted in principle his own concept of "non-overlapping magisteria" (NOMA). The magisterium (teaching authority) of the church is over morals and values; the magisterium of science is over questions of fact. So long as religion sticks to questions of value and science sticks to determining issues of fact, Gould thinks that science and religion can live together at peace.

We might call this the *Pax Scientifica*, for it would be a peace that reflects the scientific materialist assumption that knowledge (as opposed to subjective belief) belongs exclusively to the realm of fact occupied by science. The realm of value assigned to the church is more like a radio talk show, where all opinions are equal and none is authoritative. Any attempt by the church to assert a genuine teaching authority would have to rest on assumptions of fact, such as the divinity of Christ, and these would be checkmated by science.

For example, Gould says that his settlement would forbid the church to teach that miracles have actually occurred, because that would be a claim of fact within the magisterium of science, which rejects supernatural interventions as a matter of principle. Among the questions of fact which scientists would determine, then, are such questions as whether God directed and guided the evolution of life, whether Jesus actually rose from the dead, and whether there is a factual discontinuity between animals and humans attributable to divine intervention. The answers would all be negative. The rules of NOMA give scientists exclusive authority to say which factual claims are real and which are illusory, and scientists will say that the alleged supernatural events upon which the church bases its magisterium are among the illusions.

I am sure that the pope never meant to accept so one-sided a peace, nor does he accept the fact/value distinction as propounded by scientific materialists like Gould. On the contrary, the heart of the pope's statement was its attempt to distinguish between empirical science

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on the one hand, and materialist philosophy on the other. The pope did bend over backward to say how deeply the church respects the methods and results of scientific investigation on questions of fact, but that is not all he said. He was equally careful to say that current versions of evolutionary theory are influenced by controversial philosophical notions, and that scientists step beyond the boundaries of their own magisterium when they insist that a materialist philosophy can explain all of reality.

The statement was bound to be misunderstood, because scientists like Gould do not recognize a distinction between science and materialism. As Gould's Harvard colleague and intellectual ally Richard Lewontin has put it, the essence of a scientific viewpoint is to understand that "we exist as material beings in a material world, all of whose phenomena are the consequences of material relations among material entities." To Gould and Lewontin materialism is one of the facts, and so they can make no sense of the pope's insistence that there is something in man which is not an epiphenomenon of matter. Hence they simply ignore the point and assume that when the pope accepts science he effectively accepts materialism, even if he is a bit slow to realize all the consequences. If there is to be an effective dialogue between science and theology, it will have to focus on distinguishing between the facts that scientists know because of their reliable methods of investigation, and the philosophical assumptions they are tempted to make because they want science to have a monopoly in the production of knowledge. □

Phillip E. Johnson *is professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of* Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds *(Intervarsity Press).*

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MANDATORY COURTESY

William Houghton

Not too long ago, I bought a new car (Brand X) from a major manufacturer in Wisconsin.

I believe I was sold by the merits of the car. I had researched it in *Consumer Reports*, driven several models, had talked with friends and my expert daughter. It certainly wasn't the salesman at the dealership who sold me. Let's call him John. This gentleman was about sixty, had been a car salesman for many years, and was full of good cheer and over-familiarity. He didn't seem to know a lot about the vehicle in question but nonetheless spoke in a glib and pompous manner. He told me the car was "just like a Porsche," though I knew they wouldn't give it to me for one-third the price if it were. He then introduced me to the other salesmen as "a GT buyer," although I had deliberately picked a lower horsepower version. In short, a blowhard who read me poorly.

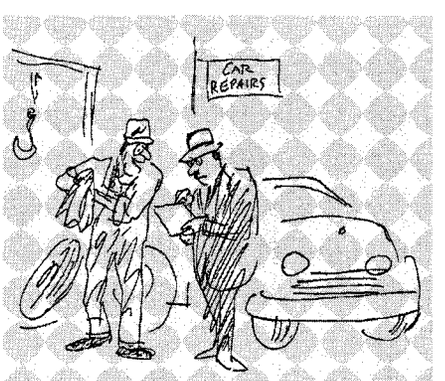
John forgot to call me a couple of times, got the specs and price figures jumbled, but I knew what I wanted and stuck with it anyhow. We set the delivery hour, I signed the papers, handed over the check, and John "checked me out on the controls," vaguely pointing to the CD knobs and the steering wheel. Then he gave me the keys and the traditional pat on the butt: "Let me know if there's anything else I can do," and broke my heart when he added, "Be sure to tell them I did a good job when the company calls."

At that point I saw John as the anxious third-grader that he is—at least in this situation—and I hastened to tell him that he had done an excellent job, that it was a wonderful car, the service was superior, etc. Next day, John duly called and asked how the car was. I replied fine, as indeed it was.

Two days later I received a phone call from a national telemarketing survey company. A woman with a thick Southern accent, impenetrable at times, was calling from Dallas to ask how the purchase of my new car had gone. She hurried along, probably knowing how many customers object or hang up, and raced through the thirty questions scrolling down her monitor, sounding bored and irritable herself. Will someone call me in a few days to ask how *this* interview went? I stood up staunchly for John, praising his salesmanship, expert knowledge, and testified in particular that he had shown me the controls and called back the next day. "Could he or the agency make any improvement?" she asked. None at all, I said, they were both superb.

I wasn't going to betray John, now that I saw the web he was caught in. And I didn't want to offend the telephone surveyor either, who clearly had a lousy job. I thanked her for calling, and the manufacturer for its concern about quality.

This kind of "quality control" is widespread now, in both manufacturing and the service industries, and I suppose it allows central managers to feel they are doing their jobs properly. But does it really add to quality? Is the information obtained reliable, or do many people, like me, answer quickly to shorten the call? And are there not other detrimental effects? Might not global telecommunications lead to global snitching, destroying trust all round?



"Oh, that item. That's for our courteous service."

In the old days, you could hate your boss up close and personal, but work out some understanding with him. Now the manager is remote and untouchable. It is not hard to see how John, or any worker in a similar situation, might develop a degree of paranoia, and under the threat of invisible surveillance put on a veneer of courtesy and helpfulness. In retrospect, I can see how some of his fear and anger were leaking out in his slightly phony manner with me.

The substance of Brand X's relation with me seemed to be the two principles of business ingrained in the souls of all M.B.A.s: First, a pleasing appearance is everything (certainly in advertising, but equally here in scripted behavior); and second, managers at higher levels can enforce courtesy and helpfulness on their underlings.

But don't coercing procedures and manners lead to perfunctory behavior and palpable smarm, making relations fake?

If they are interested in the long view, managers ought to consider two other principles: (1) What is genuine and comes from the heart is better than façade or mere good manners; and (2) superiors can make you act a certain way, but they can't make you be a certain way.

Personally, I'd rather buy a car from an individual human, whether honest or conniving, who answers to a boss on the spot, and from a dealership that has been in one place for at least five years. Those are community resources that are becoming hard to find in a global economy. □

William Houghton, M.D. *practices psychiatry in Milwaukee.*

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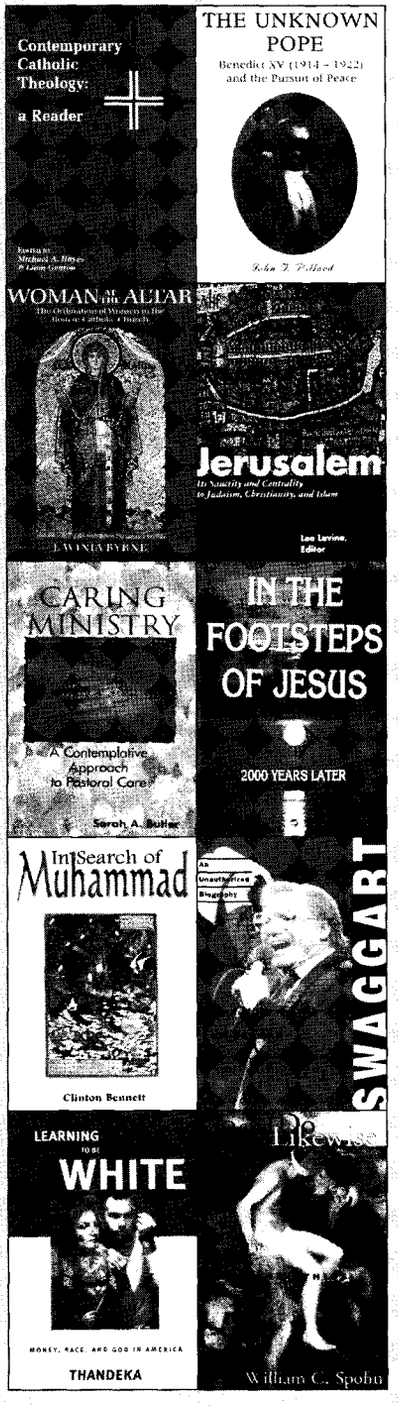

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